

MICHIGAN FARM NEWS

MICHIGAN'S ONLY STATEWIDE FARM NEWSPAPER

MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU



MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

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Young Farmer Achievement Award Winner

Isolated cases of TB confirmed in Michigan white-tailed deer

Officials from the Michigan Departments of Natural Resources (DNR), Agriculture (MDA) and Public Health (MDPH) are working together to determine the extent of tuberculosis which is known to have infected 15 Michigan white-tailed deer, located in a small area on private land in northeast Michigan, and to take actions to prevent further spread of the disease.

Officials stressed that it would be very unlikely that a person field-dressing or eating adequately cooked venison from a deer infected with TB could become infected.

It is very rare for free-ranging wildlife to contract TB, with only two recorded cases in Michigan; one about 20 years ago, and one in 1994. The *Mycobacterium bovis* TB strain is mainly spread through repeated or prolonged direct exposure to bacteria that are coughed up or exhaled by infected animals.

In November of 1994, a wild white-tailed buck shot during the firearm deer season in the "Club Country" of northern lower Michigan, near Alpena, had internal lesions that clearly showed the animal was sick. The hunter alerted the DNR, the deer was examined and the disease was confirmed to be bovine tuberculosis.

In the spring of 1995, the MDA tested livestock and the DNR tested deer in the Alpena area. No livestock or deer tested at that time were found to be infected.

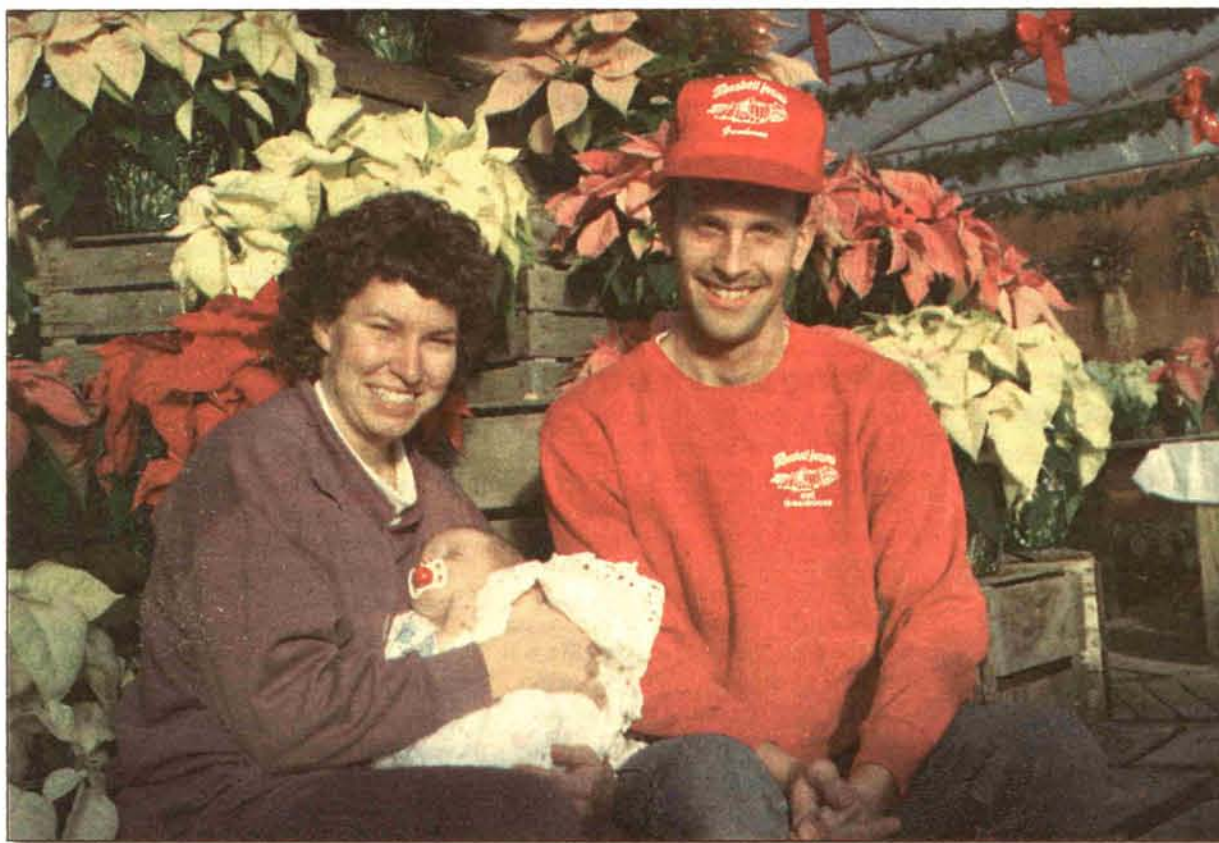
In the fall of 1995, a cooperative program between DNR, MDA, Michigan State University's (MSU) College of Veterinary Medicine and deer hunters yielded samples from over 300 deer from the northeastern lower peninsula area. This round of testing, so far, has revealed the presence of bovine tuberculosis in 15 white-tailed deer from private hunt club lands.

DNR Director Michael Moore noted that, "Though this appears to be an isolated situation in an 8 mile by 12 mile tract of private land near Alpena, we nonetheless view this situation seriously. I'm confident that the actions being taken by this multi-agency team will ensure the continued health and safety of our citizens, our livestock and our white-tailed deer herd."

MDA Director Gordon Guyer said that, from an agricultural perspective, "We will primarily focus on livestock testing and a surveillance and inventory program for livestock within an appropriate radius from confirmed, infected deer."

"We have requested assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to conduct risk assessment programs to help us determine transmission rates and health implications. We have maintained our USDA Accredited

Continued on page 10



MFB's 1995 Young Farmer Achievement Award winner, Andrew Barbott, was named runner-up in national competition at the recent AFBF annual meeting in Reno, Nev. Andrew and his wife, Miriam, who recently celebrated the birth of their first child, Matthew, operate a 350-acre vegetable and greenhouse retail operation selling flowers and bedding plants in southwest Michigan.

Court case challenges P.A. 232 commodity checkoff programs

Michigan lawsuit questions constitutionality of commodity checkoff programs, based on recent court decision in California.

Grand Rapids Federal District Court will likely decide the fate of two P.A. 232 checkoff programs for Michigan cherries which could have ramifications for all commodity checkoff funded programs, including corn, soybeans, livestock and dairy. A late-December hearing was just the first of what could be several hearings regarding the check-off programs.

Dukeshner Farms Inc., located in Berrien and Van Buren counties, has filed a lawsuit against the Michigan Cherry Committee (MCC), the Red Tart Cherry Information Program Committee (RTCIP), the state of Michigan, and Dr. Gordon Guyer as director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), saying the programs violate rights guaranteed under the First, Fifth, and 14th Amendments. Dukeshner Farms Inc. also claims that they could better spend the approximately \$20,000 collected from their operation under the P.A. 232 checkoffs.

According to pleadings it filed in U.S. District Court, the Dukeshner operation is also seeking a refund of any and all assessments made under the checkoff programs plus interest as well as compensation for court and attorney fees. During a preliminary injunction hearing held on Dec. 21, the Dukeshners

asked that an escrow account be established to hold assessments until the lawsuit is settled.

U.S. District Court Judge Robert Holmes Bell, however, denied the Dukeshner request. The state's attorney general office, which is serving as attorney for the MCC, RTCIP and MDA, has since filed a motion for dismissal, according to MFB's Commodity Division Director Ken Nye, who also serves as administrator of the RTCIP program. The attorney for Dukeshner has 28 days to respond, before the judge takes further action.

Despite previous legal attempts by the Dukeshner operation to avoid paying the assessments, this is the first time the arguments have questioned P.A. 232's impact on rights of free speech, freedom of association, and violation of civil rights.

Nye says the current case in Michigan is patterned after a similar court case in California, which challenged the constitutionality of a Federal Market Order that allowed a commodity organization, known as Cal-Almond to conduct "generic promotional activities."

"In that situation, however, you had one dominant handler of almonds that was receiving credit for brand advertising that was being conducted," Nye explained. "The court's decision in that case struck down the generic promotional activities only, leaving the research and informational programs in place."

Continued on page 3

COVER STORY

Ask Andrew Barbott what his biggest challenge has been and he'll surprisingly tell you his age. Just 25 years old, this modest, quiet-spoken young farmer from Baroda has had problems with hired help and equipment dealers taking him seriously. There's little doubt, however, just how serious Barbott takes his 350-acre vegetable, greenhouse and retail operation.

Named as Michigan Farm Bureau's 1995 Young Farmer Achievement Award winner, Barbott and his wife, Miriam, raise 125 acres of winter squash, and 75 acres of zucchini and summer squash, in addition to bell peppers and eggplants. Barbott expects to add cucumbers to his list of produce, all of which is marketed through a broker to stores based primarily in the Miami, Fla., area.

The operation also includes over 20,000 square feet of greenhouse space for raising bedding plants, including tomatoes, eggplants, bell peppers and hanging baskets for their own operation and three other neighboring vegetable farms. The young couple also operates a retail store for selling Easter lilies and bedding plants in the spring, and poinsettias and other Christmas flowers in the fall of the year.

Time and progress have earned Barbott the respect he's needed with his hired help, which can be as many as 35 employees during peak season. "When you've got workers coming in here and they see a 25-year-old kid running the farm, the biggest challenge is to get them to respect you and to do the work that you want them to," Barbott said. "I've ended up with a pretty good work crew — they've been with me now for at least four or five years — and we work together real well."

Continued on page 5

MICHIGAN FARM NEWS — A NEW YEAR AND A NEW LOOK!

You've no doubt noticed that your *Michigan Farm News* looks a little different. After nearly a year of asking and showing Michigan Farm Bureau members different design ideas, which included reader focus groups, county Farm Bureau presidents and county Farm Bureau office managers, we've implemented several changes (finally!) that we hope meet with your approval.

We've also made a few editorial changes in recent months based on reader suggestions. This issue features the first installment of a new column written by Michigan State University's Dr. Jim Kells and Dr. Karen Renner, dedicated to providing readers with the latest in weed management strategies.

Last but not least, several of the comments we received over the past year suggested that we run

letters to the editor on a regular basis. We're more than happy to oblige — so let us know what's on your mind and how you like the new look of your publication, *Michigan Farm News*. Send your comments to: *Michigan Farm News*, P.O. Box 30960, Lansing, MI 48909-8460, Fax: (517) 323-6541. E-mail: mlbinfo@aol.com or uvqc37a@prodigy.com.

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News in Brief

MFB President Jack Laurie undergoes heart bypass operation

Michigan Farm Bureau President Jack Laurie underwent a successful heart bypass operation Jan. 3, after he had experienced chest pains over the New Year's weekend. Jack is expected to return home by Jan. 7, for an anticipated four-to-six-week recovery period. Jack and his wife, Betty, have asked that no flowers be sent. Cards, however, are encouraged and can be sent to Jack at 5440 N. Dodge Road, Cass City, MI 48726.

Michigan Farm Bureau Vice President Tom Guthrie, of Delton, Barry County, will perform any necessary duties during Jack's recovery. Guthrie, who owns and operates a cash crop farm and custom harvest service, has represented District IV on the MFB board of directors since November of 1988. ■

"Dirty dozen" draws considerable response

As you may recall, we ran an article in the Dec. 15, 1995 issue of *Michigan Farm News* under the "News in Brief" section called "The dirty dozen of fruits and vegetables." In that article, we reported that an organization calling itself the Environmental Working Group, or EWG, had released a list of the so-called dirty dozen of fruits and vegetables that supposedly represents over half of the health risks from pesticides.

It was our intention to alert readers to the kind of absurd thinking and reports that are generated on a regular basis that can negatively impact the agricultural industry. We thought we had presented the information in a way that questioned the validity of the report, but apparently several readers took our article to mean that we endorsed the report. Rest assured, that's not the case!

EWG is notorious for distorting government data to further their cause. Ken Cook, executive director for EWG, has been active and vocal in opposing agricultural pesticide use and government farm programs. In addition to this report "A Shopper's Guide to Pesticides and Produce," EWG has also released other anti-pesticide reports including "Weed Killers by the Glass" and "Tap Water Blues."

In this report, they were attempting to imply that any trace level of pesticide reported somehow correlates to a health risk — which was a blatant misrepresentation of the data.

Unfortunately, EWG's irresponsible exaggerations do nothing but create uncertainty and confusion among consumers about the safety of their food supply. As a columnist in a recent issue of *Forbes* magazine put it, "It's time for us to recognize that a whole industry exists to invent, propagate and then alleviate health scares."

For those wishing to express their dissatisfaction directly to EWG over the report, we thought you might find the following information helpful: Environmental Working Group, 1718 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20009, Phone: (202) 667-6982, Fax: (202) 232-2592. ■

Baucus urges cattle pricing investigation

Montana Democratic Sen. Max Baucus urged the Senate Judiciary Committee to examine the current livestock price discrepancy situation. "Current feeder cattle prices are at a 10-year low," Baucus wrote to Judiciary Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). "While market fluctuation is expected in a cyclical business...producers have lost confidence in the market."

"It's one thing to sell your calves at 65 cents a pound if you're certain that's the true value reflected in market conditions. It's an entirely different

USDA announces changes in repayment options

Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman has announced changes in deficiency repayment options for wheat, feed grains and upland cotton growers who are obligated to reimburse the government for 1995 crop advance payments.

Under the new rules, Glickman said, producers who pay the full amount owed within the first 45 days of the billing date will not be charged interest fees. Growers also will be able to pay off their debt with money due to them through participation in the Conservation Reserve Program or other programs, with the exception of crop insurance and farm loans. If producers begin their repayment after the 46th day, interest will then accrue at a low rate.

In addition, growers will be allowed to repay their debts in installments over a three-year period, Glickman said. Interest will be waived if producers received compensation under either a "buy up" or catastrophic crop insurance coverage for the crop or if they provide sufficient evidence that they are unable to repay the amount in full. ■

Breaking up is hard to do

The United Soybean Board is breaking away from the American Soybean Association, leaving board members in search of new contractors for its multi-million dollar domestic marketing, domestic production and new-uses programs.

The ASA had previously operated all programs funded by checkoff funds and will now be left to only implement the board's \$9 million international marketing program. The three programs ASA was in charge of have a total budget of nearly \$15 million. ASA President John Long said his group "will still have a good working relationship with the USB." ■

Revised census would mean fewer "farms"

Because of congressional budget cuts, the Census Bureau has proposed revising the numbers used to survey America's farms. The new plan would bump the threshold for recognizing farms in the U.S. to operations that sell \$10,000 or more worth of crops or livestock per year, up from the current \$1,000 threshold.

If the plan holds, the number of American farms would shrink from the current 1.9 million recognized operations to nearly 1 million. Under new census guidelines, farms would be viewed as a business rather than a way of life. Using the \$10,000 threshold would save the Census Bureau approximately \$3.6 million in operating costs — Congress approved \$10 million for the 1996 farm census operations, in contrast to the \$13 million approved for 1995.

According to an Associated Press report, the revised threshold would most affect farms owned by minorities and women — shrinking the number of black-owned operations by three-quarters to 4,567 farms and those owned by women to 50,292 from 145,516.

Farm Bureau "supports the definition of a farm as at least \$2,500 in gross sales for the purpose of conducting the agricultural census." ■

matter to sell cattle at bargain basement prices when the wholesale-retail spread and packer profits are approaching record levels," he wrote.

Baucus said he has heard reports of market manipulation by packers and has fielded complaints that antitrust legislation is not strong enough to protect independent operators. He said a pending bill (S. 1340) would create a commission of producers, antitrust experts, economists, corporate financial officers and corporate procurement experts to analyze the situation. ■

USDA announces date for sheep checkoff referendum

Just one week after USDA issued a proposed rule to create a National Sheep and Wool Promotion, Research, Education and Information Order, it also announced a Feb. 6, 1996, referendum date for the sheep industry. The order outlines a program designed to strengthen the position of sheep and sheep products in the marketplace. All producers, feeders and importers who certify they were engaged in the production, feeding or importation of sheep or sheep products — with the exception of importers of raw wool only — between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 1994, are eligible to vote.

Voting will be held at the county Cooperative Extension Service offices. Voters may register and vote in person or request absentee ballots. Absentee ballots must be requested from the office serving the county of voter residence, for individuals, or the county where the business headquarters are located, for corporations. Absentee ballot requests, filed in person or by mail, may be made between Jan. 16 and Jan. 26, 1996.

Absentee ballots must be received in the county Extension office by the close of business on Feb. 2, 1996. The Farm Service Agency (formerly ASCS) will count the ballots, determine eligibility of voters and tabulate results.

For the order to go into effect, the proposal must be approved by either a simple majority of voters or by voters who account for two-thirds of the sheep and wool production represented in the referendum.

If approved, the program will be funded by a mandatory assessment on domestic sheep producers, sheep feeders, and importers of sheep and sheep products. Domestic producers will be assessed 1-cent per pound on sales of live sheep and 2 cents per pound on sales of greasy wool. Importers will be assessed a 2-cent-per-pound equivalent on imported degreased wool and wool products.

Imported raw wool is exempt from assessment. USDA will announce when collections begin if the proposal is approved by referendum.

It is proposed that the program be administered by a 120-member National Sheep Promotion, Research and Information Board, comprised of 85 producers, 10 feeders and 25 importers. ■

USDA food stamp investigation finds few criminals

An investigation of stores accepting food stamps, originally called an attempt to rid the system of fraud and abuse, has come up short of meeting the intended goal.

According to USDA, instead of Operation Checkout stopping food stamp abuse, the investigation merely highlighted the large number of stores who accept food stamps without offering enough of the required foodstuffs for sale. About 10 percent of the original 753 stores kicked out of the food stamp program were actually found to be accepting food stamps in exchange for cash or drugs. Most of the stores, including an additional 681 stores in Los Angeles County, were kicked out of the program for being ineligible, not participating in fraud.

To defend the investigation of the food stamp program, Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman's press secretary, Tom Amontree, said the government loses up to \$900 million per year because of food stamp fraud. He said the department will continue its investigation and search for fraud and abuse of the food stamp system.

"We want to send a message to people out there who continue to rip off the food stamp program that the Clinton administration is determined to put them out of business," Amontree said. ■

Pilot crop insurance program tested in Florida

A pilot crop insurance program, developed to safeguard citrus and other tropical fruit growers from disaster due to inclement weather conditions, will be tested in Florida, according to the Agriculture Department.

The new program is designed to help growers replace or rehabilitate trees damaged by weather. Coverage will be available to citrus, avocado, caram-

USDA: OK to plant soybeans on optional flex acres in '96

Producers will be able to plant soybeans on optional flexible acres (OFA) in 1996, according to Agriculture Deputy Secretary Richard Rominger.

The Agricultural Act of 1949 forbids the planting of soybeans on OFA if, on Jan. 1 of the new year, the estimated price of soybeans is less than 105 percent of the loan rate — \$5.17 per bushel. However, since soybean prices are predicted to be greater than this threshold, the crop can be planted on OFA in 1996. ■

New beef steam pasteurization process approved by USDA

A new beef pasteurization process has been approved by the Agriculture Department. The process, developed by Cargill Inc. and Frigoscandia Inc., kills germs by applying blasts of steam to the beef carcasses.

The treatment lasts for at least six seconds, and can only be applied after the washing, trimming and inspecting of carcasses. The steaming destroys germs, but does not affect the appearance or quality of the meat, USDA said.

Cargill's Excel Corp. meat packing plants, located in Wichita, Kan., will employ the new technology in the near future. ■

Price hike not so sweet

American sugar farmers want to make it clear that a recent price increase announced by Hershey Chocolate U.S.A. is not due to the price of sugar, which has declined in price the past five years. Hershey's price hike will amount to about 5 cents more per candy bar at the grocer's counter. The 11 percent rise was due to the cumulative impact over these past five years of increased costs for packaging, fuel, transportation, labor and benefits, as well as rising costs of materials, Hershey said.

Charles Thibaut, a sugarcane producer from Louisiana, emphasized that sugar was not among those ingredients costing more. "Cane and beet farmers have also been subject to higher costs of fuel, transportation, labor and materials, but we haven't had a price increase in 10 years, and in fact, have had to cope with a drop in the price we receive for our product," he claimed.

According to figures from USDA and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the wholesale sugar price paid by Hershey and other food manufacturers has plummeted 16 percent since 1990. ■

Global farm product demand to rise in next millennium

The global demand for agricultural products is expected to increase by 2010, which should provide the United States, the European Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States with the potential of an export boom, according to a new independent French study.

The study, administered by the BIPE Conseil for the French Sugar Beet Planters Association, showed that the steadily growing demand for farm products from Asia, Africa and Latin America will fuel export growth.

By 2010, international demand for grain is expected to jump by 38 percent, sugar demand should rise by 41 percent, soybean demand should increase by 44 percent and meat demand should rise by 46 percent, according to the study.

Due to the increased export potential of the U.S., EU and CIS members, especially Russia and Ukraine, BIPE said, the burgeoning demands should be easily met by the available supplies. However, farm product prices, the study said, should "at best remain unchanged in real terms." ■

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Capitol Corner

NATIONAL ISSUE

1995 farm bill update

When Pres. Clinton vetoed the Balanced Budget Act of 1995, also known as the budget reconciliation bill that would balance the federal budget in seven years, the fate of the 1995 farm bill was also left in question.

Several commodity titles, export assistance provisions and some conservation provisions were included in the bill and together they were referred to as the 1995 Farm Bill.

The president cited his opposition to capital gains cuts, estate tax cuts, windfall payments to farmers when prices are high, cuts in export funding, and reductions in CRP environmental benefits as some of the reasons for the veto.

The veto has thrown the budget reconciliation package back to Congress where negotiations with the White House are underway to reach a compromise. Shortly after the veto, the president released a seven-year balanced budget plan of his own. For agriculture the plan includes the following provisions:

- Agriculture spending would be cut \$5.2 billion.
- The current 15 percent of base acreage ineligible for subsidies would be increased to 21 percent.
- The 11.25-cents-per-cwt. assessment on milk would be continued.
- Subsidy payments would be eliminated to producers earning more than \$100,000 per year in off-farm income.
- The tobacco and peanut programs would be converted into no-net-cost programs.
- Existing CRP contracts would be extended, new enrollments would be offered and targeted to acres of higher environmental quality.
- Marketing loans would be available at not less than 85 percent of the simple average price received by producers.
- Target prices would be maintained at the current level.
- The honey program would be terminated.
- Payments under the Emergency Livestock Feeding program would be eliminated where crop insurance is available.
- The Farmer Owned Reserve would continue.
- The milk price support would continue at \$10.10 per cwt.
- Farm program payments to farmers would be limited to \$50,000 per individual.
- The permanent Agricultural Act of 1949 would be repealed.

In the budget reconciliation bill vetoed by the president, agricultural spending was cut \$12.3 billion to help balance the budget by 2002. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has released a report acknowledging a more significant improvement in the outlook for farm markets over the next seven years than previously forecast. The CBO said the earlier \$58 billion cost of farm programs over the next seven years would fall to \$48 billion because of higher market prices.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) said he was optimistic Republican leaders would scale back proposed farm program cuts to just \$4.5 billion over seven years rather than

the \$12.3 billion earlier approved by Congress. Where the original \$12.3 billion in cuts would be scaled back to reflect the new CBO projection or what changes might be made in farm program policy is not known at this time.

Finally, dairy leaders have reached a compromise on the dairy program. The dairy title was dropped from the budget reconciliation bill earlier because the dairy industry and Congressional leaders could not agree on a program. Following are provisions in the compromise dairy program:

I. Permanent provisions effective upon enactment:

1. All budget assessments would be repealed.
2. The price support for butter and nonfat dry milk would be discontinued.
3. The price support for cheese would be continued.

II. Provisions in effect for two years from date of enactment:

1. The floor for Class I prices would be the January 1996 price levels in each order. (This provision is designed to bring additional revenue into the system and cover the pooling costs proposed in the sections below. It represents a partial decoupling of the fluid price from that paid for manufacturing milk. The January 1996 price is estimated to be about \$1 per cwt. higher than the overall average price for 1996 and would increase net income to dairy farms. Milk processors are expected to oppose this provision.)
2. One-half of the amount by which the Class IV price falls below the support price at the national average Class IV utilization (approximately 10 percent) would be pooled. (This provision is an effort to share some of the lower price associated with removing the support price for butter and nonfat dry milk powder while helping to move these products in export markets in a GATT legal manner. Prices nationwide would benefit if additional product moved into the export market. Without this provision, there would be a strong incentive to move milk out of the butter and powder market and into cheese or other products. If more milk moved into cheese, overall prices would drop.)
3. 80 cents per cwt. of all Class I prices at the national average Class I utilization (approximately 40 percent) would be pooled. (This provision addresses the upper Midwest's desire for sharing a portion of the Class I differential and covering a perceived drop in price associated with the pooling of Class IV. Freezing the Class I prices (see item 1 above) provides extra income to offset income loss in high Class I areas.)

III. Within two years from date of enactment, USDA is directed to administratively make the following changes in federal orders:

1. Consolidate all federal orders into not less than eight or more than 13 orders.
2. Create a stand-by pool to facilitate milk supply movements to deficit markets.

The dairy compromise is being presented to Congressional leaders. If accepted, it is not known whether it will be included in the overall budget reconciliation bill now being negotiated or treated as separate legislation later.

MFB Contact: Al Almy, ext. 2040. ■

STATE ISSUE

Legislation amends the Youth Employment Standards Act

Legislation recently signed by Gov. John Engler will allow minors to work extended hours in agricultural processing operations. Specifically, the bills provide for:

- The legal employment and protection of minors;
- The issuance and revocation of work permits;
- The regulation of hours and conditions of employment of minors;
- Prescribed powers and duties of the departments of labor and education;
- The enforcement of this act;
- Prescribed penalties;
- The repeal of other labor acts.

The act now allows a minor 16 years of age or older to be employed in agricultural processing for a period greater than the periods otherwise legally allowed if all of the following conditions are met:

- If the minor is a student in school and school is not in session.
- The minor is employed for not more than 11 hours in 1 day.
- The minor is employed for not more than 62 hours in 1 week.
- The minor is not employed between 2 A.M. and 5:30 A.M.
- The minor is working in "Agricultural Processing," which means the cleaning, sorting, or packaging of Fruits and Vegetables.

Processors indicated they had a severe shortage of available labor last year, and needed these changes to recruit younger people.

Some opponents of the law have expressed fears that this law will create "sweat shops" where children will be working below the minimum wage of Michigan, which is \$3.35 an hour, and will not receive overtime or unemployment pay.

Michigan Department of Labor Deputy Director Dr. Kalmin Smith calls such statements an attempt to embarrass legislators who voted for S.B. 542 and Gov. John Engler who signed the bill. "Implications are that the industry wants to pay less than minimum wage and that the bill would allow them to do so," Smith said. "Michigan law does not require payment of the state minimum wage of \$3.35 to minors; nor does it require time-and-a-half for overtime."

Smith went on to say that Michigan minimum and overtime provisions are irrelevant to this law because most fruit and vegetable processors in Michigan are covered by federal law. Federal law requires employers to pay the federal minimum wage of \$4.25 to 16- and 17-year-old minors.

Federal law also requires time-and-a-half to 16- and 17-year-olds for overtime. According to the Michigan Food Processors Association, all food and vegetable processors currently pay \$5.00 or more per hour in order to attract and keep workers.

Unemployment compensation is not an issue as high school students have never been entitled to unemployment benefits either, says Smith.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau supported the bill.

MFB Contact: Howard Kelly, ext. 2044. ■

State Issues continue on page 6



MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

For more information on legislative topics in the Michigan Farm News, call 800-292-2680.

STATE ISSUE

Environmental audit privilege and immunity

S.B. 728, sponsored by Sen. Loren Bennett (R-Canton), would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to provide for environmental audits, and provide disclosure protection for individuals.

"Environmental Audit" would mean a voluntary evaluation of compliance with state, federal, regional or local laws or ordinances of an activity, or of a specific instance of historic or current noncompliance of environmental law. The report would be labeled "Environmental Audit Report, Privileged Document."

An environmental audit created by an owner or operator or their employee or agent can be developed at any time. Generally, an environmental audit report created under the bill would be privileged and protected from disclosure. Persons involved in the audit are not compelled to testify, and the report cannot be used as evidence in a civil, criminal or administrative proceeding. Knowingly divulging privileged information is considered a misdemeanor punishable by fines of not more than \$25,000.

If individuals make a voluntary disclosure to the appropriate state or local agency, the bill clearly spells out what constitutes a voluntary disclosure and indicates, unless shown otherwise, the disclosure is voluntary.

The bill provides that immunity will not be granted in cases where the person seeking immunity has been found to have committed a series of serious repeated violations of environmental laws.

The bill also provides that a grant of immunity does not relieve a person of the responsibility to correct violations to current law standards.

MFB Position: Farm Bureau supports S.B. 728 as a voluntary compliance method to environmental laws.

MFB Contact: Scott Everett, ext. 2046. ■

STATE ISSUE

Elimination of no-fault auto insurance territorial constraints

House Bill 5177, sponsored by Rep. Gerald H. Law (R-Plymouth), would eliminate current state mandates constraining auto insurance rating. Currently, an insurance company must comply with the following restrictions:

- 1) an insurance company's lowest territorial base rate can be no less than 45 percent of its highest rate.
- 2) contiguous territories can differ by only 10 percent.
- 3) insurance companies are required to have 20 territories.

These legislative constraints were enacted in the early 1980s in an attempt to ensure equity and accessibility of auto insurance to Michigan citizens. These measures have had the opposite effect, however, as insurance companies have left Michigan. In 1983, there were 216 insurance companies writing in Michigan. In 1993, there were only 125 companies in Michigan.

In addition, these measures have caused rural subsidization of urban areas and good drivers to subsidize bad drivers. House Bill 5177 would allow insurance companies to determine auto rates based on each community's experience, which will eliminate these subsidies.

House Bill 5177 has passed the House and is waiting action on the Senate floor.

MFB Position: MFB supports H.B. 5177

MFB Contact: Tim Goodrich, ext. 2048. ■

Court case challenges P.A. 232 commodity checkoff programs

Continued from front page

Phil Korson, recording secretary of the Michigan Cherry Committee, speculates that another California court case involving another tree-fruit order's generic promotion program will eventually go to the U.S. Supreme Court, adding that a lot of commodity groups are keeping an eye on the outcome of that case as well as the Dukeshier case here in Michigan.

"I always have concerns when we're dealing with self-help programs for growers," Korson cautioned. "In today's environment, we've got many challenges and opportunities that require we have a vehicle in place so that growers can come together to address common problems and work on new product development in a collective manner."

Nye agrees, saying that both programs have

been overwhelmingly approved in past grower referendums by as much as a 90 percent margin. The referendums are scheduled every five years. "Once programs like these are developed and overwhelmingly approved by the grower community, everyone should contribute and we should do all that we can to reduce the 'free-rider' concept," Nye said.

"The cherry industry has voted to institute these programs to benefit everyone," Nye continued. "We currently find ourselves with some serious over-production problems that necessitate the development of new products and market development, both domestically and internationally."

Funds from the RTCIP checkoff, in existence since 1979, total approximately \$350,000 to \$400,000 annually and are used for cherry industry informational and statistical programs and market-

ing and bargaining activities. The RTCIP assessment for the 1995 crop was set at \$2.75 per ton on red tart cherries only, says Nye.

Another \$800,000 to \$1 million collected annually under the MCC checkoff, which has been in existence since 1972, are used for generic promotional activities, product development, and research activities. The MCC assessment is set at \$10 per ton for red tart cherries and \$5 per ton for juice cherries.

Nye says that P.A. 232 programs are governed by producer boards of directors and regulated and monitored by MDA. The programs also have built-in accountability measures that allow interested producers to see just how their checkoff monies are being spent, Nye added. The structure for the state's P.A. 232 commodity promotion programs was created in 1965 when the Michigan Legislature

passed the Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act.

Michigan Farm Bureau and the Cherry Marketing Institute have both filed *amicus* briefs with the Grand Rapids Federal District Court in support of the P.A. 232 programs, according to Nye. He's hopeful that all producers look at the big picture and take this threat to commodity promotion programs seriously.

"Other commodity groups and producers, should keep a close eye on the outcome of this court case, and make sure that our P.A. 232 programs are strongly supported in the state," Nye said. "I think the commodity groups are pretty well armed with the necessary arguments and past court decisions to uphold P.A. 232 programs, but producer support is crucial." ■

Weather Outlook

Below normal temps expected to continue

Dr. Jeffrey Andresen, Extension agricultural meteorologist, Department of Geography, Michigan State University

December averaged colder and drier than normal over much of Michigan with the exception of lakeshore areas where lake effect snowfall was much heavier than normal. The most spectacular snowfall so far this winter took place Dec. 8-11, when arctic-origin air persisted from a west-northwesterly direction over the open water of Lake Superior for more than 72 hours. This resulted in a paralyzing 61.7-inch snowfall event for the Sault Ste. Marie area (more than doubling the old record for a single snowfall event), with more than 40 inches reported across other sections of the Upper Peninsula.

While the latest National Weather Service 30-day outlook for January continues to call for near equal chances of below-, near- and above-normal temperature and precipitation, I personally think that the northwesterly flow aloft that has been responsible for the colder than normal winter thus far will likely continue for a significant portion of January as well, resulting in a continuation of generally colder and drier than normal weather.

The exception to this trend would again be the lakeshore areas, where lake effect snowfall will bring precipitation totals closer to normal.

Looking further ahead, the 90-day outlook for January through March calls for better than normal chances of below normal temperatures and near equal odds of below-, near-, and above-normal precipitation. Preliminary indications for the late winter/early spring period favor the below normal precipitation scenario with equal odds of all scenarios for temperatures. ■



Michigan Weather Summary

12/1/95 to 12/31/95	Temperature Observed mean	Dev. from normal	Precipitation Actual (inch)	Normal (inch)
Houghton	19.2	-1.1	2.82	2.11
Marquette	17.4	-0.3	2.48	2.11
Escanaba	18.8	-4.3	4.53	2.11
Sault Ste. Marie	17.1	-3.0	5.82	2.11
Lake City	20.0	-3.3	1.41	2.15
Pellston	20.4	-2.3	2.55	2.15
Traverse City	23.5	-3.2	4.36	2.15
Alpena	22.0	-2.2	1.33	2.06
Houghton Lake	21.0	-2.8	1.32	2.06
Muskegon	24.6	-4.0	1.79	2.49
Vestaburg	21.4	-5.3	1.06	2.11
Bad Axe	23.1	-3.9	0.78	1.93
Saginaw	23.5	-3.3	1.44	1.93
Grand Rapids	24.6	-2.7	1.53	2.71
South Bend	27.6	-1.3	1.73	2.71
Coldwater	25.9	-2.0	0.63	2.11
Lansing	24.1	-3.0	1.15	2.11
Detroit	26.1	-2.0	0.81	2.31
Flint	23.8	-3.6	1.13	2.31
Toledo	26.4	-2.2	0.43	2.31

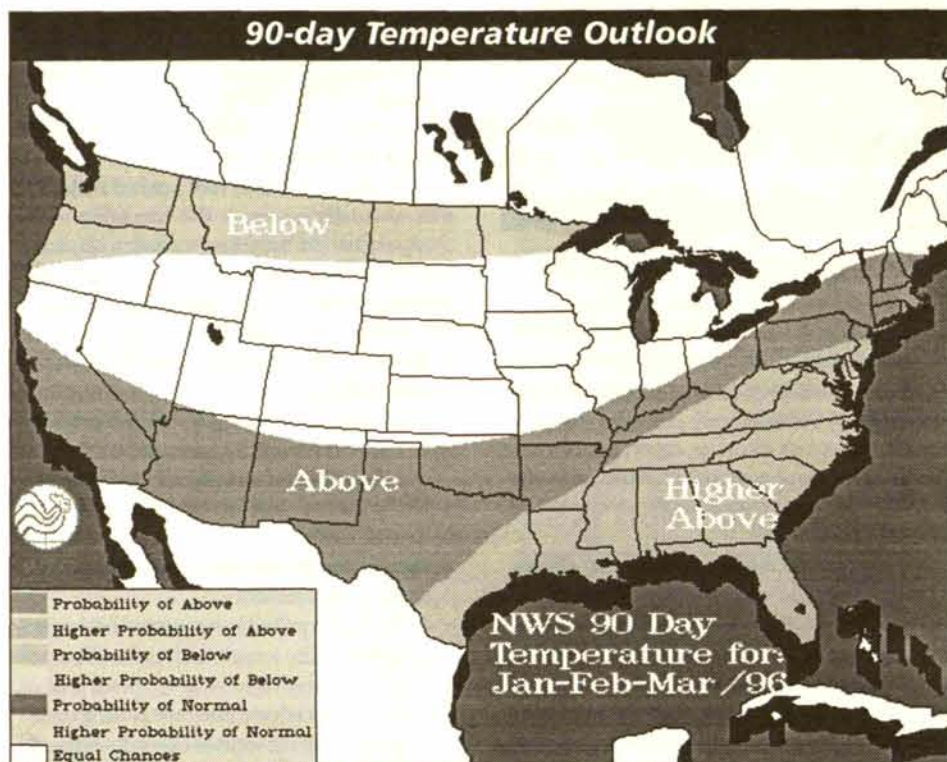
Observed totals are accumulated from April 1. Normals are based on district averages.

Beef production expected up again

The National Cattlemen's Association said domestic beef production will be up again in 1996, meaning continued good deals for consumers and continuing trouble for the nation's cattle producers.

"A year of slim returns for cattle feeders and substantial losses for most cow-calf operators is expected," said Bob Drake, NCA president. NCA said beef production will be up 3 percent in 1996—up from 25.1 billion pounds in 1995 to approximately 25.9 billion pounds. Consumption also is expected to be up to nearly 69 pounds of beef per person.

NCA said the cattle herd expansion will likely curtail this year, with herd thinning taking place in 1996 and the cattle output peaking in 1997. Cattle numbers have risen from 95.8 million head in 1990 to an estimated 105.5 million in 1996. Production of other meats, including poultry, is also expected to increase in 1996. ■



FCIC expands crop insurance for several Michigan counties

by Eric Fischer

If you happen to be a corn producer in Iron County or if you raise barley in St. Joseph County, you will be pleased to hear that the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation has expanded crop insurance for a number of crops in various counties around Michigan for 1996 and beyond.

According to Lonnie Young of the USDA State Consolidated Farm Service Agency in East Lansing, the expansion will allow wheat producers in counties such as Dickinson, for example, to be eligible for catastrophic crop insurance, regardless of acreage. "In various parts of the state, certain crops just aren't produced at the same level of acreage as they are in other parts of the state. This expansion will allow as many of those areas to be included in the program as possible," he said.

"Before 1996, crops would've been covered under the Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) and would need a certain area loss in order to receive any insurance benefits," said Young. "With the catastrophic insurance coverage, if your crop happens to get wiped out by hail and no one else's in the area does, you are still eligible for insurance benefits, regardless of how much you produce."

Young says that many USDA programs require at least catastrophic crop insurance on crops of economic significance. "Because crop insurance is necessary for participation in USDA programs, there has been a push to reestablish crop insurance availability in as many counties as possible," he said.

Young predicts the expansion will be a more efficient and convenient way of getting insurance to producers. "It's a little better way of doing things,"

he said. For more information, call Young at (517) 337-6659.

The list below shows the crops which are now eligible for crop insurance in the corresponding counties. ■

Crop	County
Barley	Berrien, Lake, Macomb, Midland, Monroe, Oakland, Oscoda, St. Joseph, Wayne
Corn	Iron
Oats	Wayne
Soybeans	Menominee, Missaukee
Sugar Beets	Genesee
Wheat	Alger, Benzie, Chippewa, Crawford, Dickinson, Gogebic, Iron, Kalkaska, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Oscoda, Schoolcraft, Wayne

Plastic golf tees make good compost fodder

Can refuse from starch-based plastics be converted into compost for farms and gardens? In most cases, no—not until the current biodegradable formulations change. But in the case of plastic golf tees, yes.

In a project conducted by ARS and Rodale Institute researchers, plastic golf tees were found to be indistinguishable from the decayed leaves, used paper plates and poultry litter with which they were composted for 11 weeks.

Other items, such as plastic forks and other starch-based plastics, and the pellets used to manufacture them, failed to decompose sufficiently, even after a year. ■



Serving Michigan Farm Families is Our Only Business

Since its beginning in 1971, Michigan Farm Radio Network's only objective has been to serve Michigan's farm families. This dedication to serve agriculture is shared by 29 local radio stations in Michigan. Through these stations, Michigan Farm Radio Network provides the latest in market analysis, weather and news to Farm Bureau members daily on the following stations:

Station	City	Frequency	Morning Farm	Noon Farm
WABJ	Adrian	1490	5:45 am	11:50 am
WATZ	Alpena	1450	5:30 am	11:30 am
WTKA	Ann Arbor	1050	6:05 am	12:05 pm
WLEW	Bad Axe	1340	6:30 am	12:50 pm
WHFB	Benton Harbor			12:30 pm
WKYO	Caro	1360	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WKJF	Cadillac	1370	5:55 am	11:20 am
WTVB	Coldwater	1590	5:45 am	12:20 pm
WDOW	Dowagiac	1440	6:05 am	12:15 pm
WGHN	Grand Haven	1370/92.1	5:45 am	12:15 pm
WPLB	Greenville	1380	6:15 am	11:45 am
WBCH	Hastings	1220	6:15 am	12:30 pm
WCSR	Hillsdale	1340	6:45 am	12:45 pm
WHTC	Holland	1450		12:15 pm
WKZO	Kalamazoo	590	5:15 am	
WLSP	Lapeer	1530	7:20 am	11:50 am
WOAP	Owosso	1080	6:15 am	12:30 pm
WHAK	Rogers City	960		12:15 pm
WSJ	St. Johns	1580	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WMLM	St. Louis	1540	6:05 am	12:20 pm
WSGW	Saginaw	790	5:55 am	12:20 pm
WMIC	Sandusky	660	6:15 am	12:45 pm
WCSY	South Haven	940		12:15 pm
WKJC	Tawas City	104.7		12:45 pm
WLKM	Three Rivers	1510/95.9	6:15 am	12:15 pm
WTCM	Traverse City	580	5:55 am	11:20 am

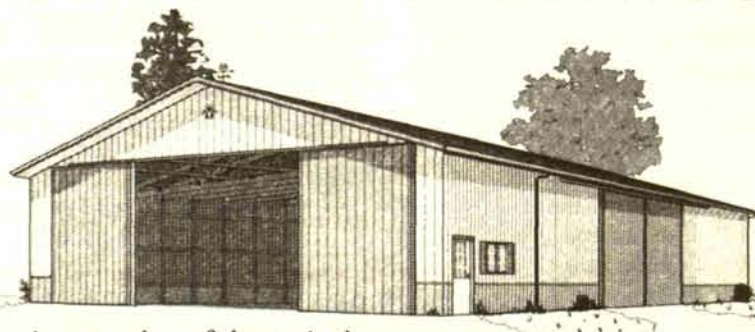
* Station signs on at different times during the year. Morning farm times change with the sign-on times.

** Station airs various farm reports between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m.

*** Station airs various farm reports between 12:00 and 1:00 p.m.

Some stations carry additional market reports throughout the market day.

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90-day Precipitation Outlook



Andrew Barbott wins!

Continued from front page

Barbott has also won the respect of two local equipment dealers who, in Barbott's words, "will have all of my business in the future." That's pretty significant considering that virtually every piece of equipment on the farm has been replaced during the last three years. "I went to three or four different dealers and most of them just kind of laughed and downplayed the whole deal," Barbott explains.

Shortly after graduating from high school, and while he was enrolled in greenhouse management classes at Andrews University in nearby Berrien Springs, his father, Al, was diagnosed with cancer, meaning that Andrew got a crash course in running the family's vegetable operation while his father spent a great deal of time in Ann Arbor. "It was pretty hard because we fought it for over two years straight," Barbott reminisced. "Trying to spend time with him and yet keep the operation going was pretty tough."

After Barbott's father passed away in 1991, Andrew managed the operation for a year before purchasing it from his mother. Since then, the operation has doubled its greenhouse space, built a new packing facility that more than doubled capacity, and added a second produce grading line.

"We've been pretty aggressive in the greenhouse aspect of the operation over the last few years," Barbott explained. "We're just getting started in the bedding plants."

Cropping enterprises have consistently focused on vegetables, with conventional crops of corn and wheat being planted only when necessary for rotation. In addition to adding cucumbers to the produce list for next year, Barbott plans on growing plum tomatoes as well. Barbott bases most of his cropping decisions on his broker's needs.

"We just picked up some more sales for next year for another 20,000 to 30,000 bushels of different crops, just because the market was there and the brokers were looking for somebody to produce it. If you're in vegetable production, before you grow it you ought to have it sold," Barbott cautioned. "About 90 percent of our stuff is sold even before I buy the seed."

Integrated Pest Management, or IPM, has also played a big role in the Barbott operation, with chemical use now down to 10 percent of what it was just six years ago. "We've virtually eliminated the use of pesticides," Barbott said. "We do a lot of scouting and we don't use pesticides until we have to."

While Andrew handles the crop management chores, wife Miriam is primarily responsible for operating the farm's retail store and managing the greenhouse labor, in addition to taking care of the accounting and payroll responsibilities. The operation is also considering expanding the retail facet of the operation by adding a second location next year.

Barbott credits retired Andrews University Professor Arthur Brown for getting him interested and started in the greenhouse business. When Barbott finally decided to take college courses in agriculture after high school graduation, he settled on Western Michigan University. As fate would have it, that was the same year that the ag program at Western was discontinued.

Barbott then heard about a new ag program being developed at Andrews University in nearby Berrien Springs, where he met Brown. "The professor and I got to be good friends, and he actually talked me into building the first greenhouse, and it's just kind of kept growing from there," he explained.

So what does the future hold for this enterprising young farm couple? "Our goal, long-term, is not to necessarily add more acres, but to increase yields every year by 10 percent for the next five years," Barbott says. "I think it's a pretty good goal to have."

Sugar beets and site specific — convincing precision

Still question the wisdom and potential returns of Site Specific Agriculture? A project by Ag-Chem Equipment Company and the American Crystal Sugar Company offers some pretty convincing real-life statistics to support predictions that site specific or precision farming will allow more cost effective and environmentally beneficial use of inputs.

Using Ag-Chem's Soilection™ technology to apply variable rates of fertilizer and herbicides across a field to meet the nutrient and herbicide rates in each part of the field, fertilizer dealers commercially treated 13,000 acres for Crystal Sugar growers in 1995 in Minnesota. This is expected to grow to 150,000 acres (35 percent of the total crop) in 1996.

American Crystal Sugar Company has made the commercial advantages of this technology clear by demonstrating that a crop can use fertilizer more efficiently. American Crystal also changed its sugar beet payment system from total root yield/acre to pounds of recoverable sugar/acre.

It did so by showing farmers that the excess nitrogen they were applying for root yield/acre did not translate to sugar yield/acre. The company found that excess nitrogen reduces sugar content

and the resulting increase in impurities causes sugar loss to molasses. As a result of the company's findings, farmers reduced their average nitrogen use from 170 to 120 lbs./acre.

The lower rates, geared toward sugar instead of root yield/acre, helped farmers increase recoverable sugar by 50 lbs./ton. The combined input (nitrogen) savings and the increase in recoverable sugar/acre is worth approximately \$76 million annually to Crystal Sugar growers.

Crystal Sugar didn't stop there. With grid sampling and Soilection equipment and software, the company used variable rates of nitrogen and phosphorus to meet the needs of each part of the field and compared it with a standard nonvariable application. Again, the results demonstrated fertilizer savings and a significant increase in recoverable sugar/acre worth an additional \$141 of net profit/acre!

While the benefits of variable rate technology for sugar beets are clear, the practice is also catching on in the Midwest where variable rate technology was used on 1.3 million acres this year. That could grow to 3 million acres in 1996 as more benefits are demonstrated for corn.

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Market Outlook

Jim Hilker, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University

CORN

What corn price will it take to start rationing use? Hopefully, the final 1995 *Crop Production Report* and the *Stocks Report* released Jan. 11 will have shed some light on that question. At this point, exports continue strong, running ahead of last year when we had low prices. The *Hogs and Pigs Report* discussed below shows no large herd liquidation, and the cattle already here have to be fed sometime. Is \$4.00 corn a real possibility? We have very few historical points at prices this high to guide us.

If the reports were bullish for prices, we may go to new historical highs. If the reports were bearish, it may temper prices until we get to weather scares. In either case, remember these are excellent prices, both old and new crop. Consider keeping some portion (not large) of your 1995 production for a further ride; but if the reports were bullish, we may see most of the ride fairly soon. Consider taking advantage of spring weather scares using new crop versus carrying a lot of old crop into late spring.

If you do decide to hold some portion of 1995 production, how you hold it is critical. No one should be paying commercial storage or DP payments; use a basis contract, a call or MPC. There is no room for basis tightening to pay commercial storage. Even for those with corn in on-farm storage, returns from basis tightening are questionable. Look at the spreads, or lack of, in the futures. While I feel there is more upside potential, it would still be completely rational to sell everything at today's prices.

WHEAT

Wheat is showing signs of topping, which would be normal for this time of year. Consider finishing up any remaining old crop sales and concentrating on new crop pricing. If the reports are bullish, consider pricing some new crop on the rally — how much would depend on how much you have priced up to this point. If you have priced very little and you planted a significant amount of wheat, consider pricing a significant amount of your expected production.

Wheat exports continue to run ahead of last year and demand in general is good, but there is a good chance that it is already priced in the market. This is not to say there is not upside potential; weather scares for either wheat or other grains could take it higher, but there is also down-side potential and delivering some wheat out of the field over \$4.00 will not hurt a whole lot.

Seasonal Commodity Price Trends

Corn	↑↑
Soybeans	↑↑
Wheat	↑↑
Hogs	↑↑
Cattle	↑↑

Index: ↑↑ = stable prices; ↑ = higher prices; ↓ = lower prices; TP = topping; BT = bottoming; ? = unsure

SOYBEANS

Unless the two reports showed otherwise, the situation in soybeans is not as tight as corn, but nonetheless it is tight, especially in light of the tightness in the other grains. Again, we do not have a lot of history at these stocks-to-use ratios to base our fundamental analysis on, but it is clear prices will remain historically high through next year, given trend yields. That does not mean the market cannot go down, but rather there are some limits to how far it will go down.

Face it, prices are good and we need to be taking advantage of them to some degree, no matter what prices may do. This is not to say we shouldn't try to take advantage of further possible price increases with a portion of our production. As with corn, basis tightening will not likely cover storage, especially off-farm. Therefore, consider moving your old crop and tying your prices to the futures with basis contracts, calls or MPC. Also, be watching those new crop prices; they are not too shabby. Isn't it fun to have potential weather scares all year long when you consider both the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

HOGS

The Quarterly Dec. 1 *Hogs and Pigs Report*, released Dec. 28, was a shocker — to say the least. The futures were limited down in the nearbys for 2 days before they started trading. The report shows we have 2-3 percent more pigs out there than the trade expected. And, even if the USDA numbers turn out to be a bit high, it is not likely we will go back to the recent high anytime before next fall.

The report shows we have slightly more hogs than a year ago. Breeding numbers are up 1 percent and market hogs are even. Hogs over 180 pounds were down 2 percent, those 120-179 pounds were down 1 percent, those 60-119 pounds were even, and those born this past fall were up 2 percent — all from a year ago. Pigs per litter continues to grow at a record rate, with an average of 8.34 pigs saved per litter. On top of this, December-February planned farrowings are up 1 percent, and March-May farrowing intentions are up 2 percent.

The report fits fairly well with fall sow slaughter, which was down. But it doesn't fit with the hot summer potential breeding problems or the low hog-corn price ratios. And at least part of the answer to this puzzle is seen as you look at the individual state numbers. In general, the expansion is coming in the states which tend to have large oper-

ations and with climate control buildings. Also, there continues to be liquidation in some Corn Belt states, including Indiana and Illinois.

In Michigan, the numbers were down sharply. The report showed the breeding herd down 6 percent and market hogs down 8 percent. We expect to farrow 5 percent fewer hogs in the December-February period, but be equal to the previous year this next March-May period. Average pigs per litter stayed at 8.0 for last fall, but increased in the first and third quarters.

CATTLE

The cattle just keep coming and the feed prices just keep going up. The December *Cattle-On-Feed Report* showed November placements up after taking some time off in October. Marketings were strong, but placements more than offset them, increasing inventory 2 percent over the previous year. This suggests first quarter marketings will be above year ago levels. And, while prices are expected to work their way up a little, they will still be way below last year's price of over \$70/cwt.

Weak cattle prices, along with high feed prices, have driven down feeder prices to disastrous levels. And the picture is not likely to get better until feed prices come back down, which will be next fall — at the earliest. The other problem is, we will likely have a bigger calf crop this year than last, postponing good calf prices at least 1 year, if not 2. The Jan. 1 *Cattle Inventory Report* is to be released Feb. 2. It should give an indication of how long it will take to turn this shipwreck around.

EGGS

by Henry Larzelere

Egg prices at the end of the year were about 17 cents a dozen above last year's levels. These prices were partly offset by higher feed ingredient prices which were about 9 cents per dozen eggs above last year.

It is expected that wholesale egg prices in New York for Grade A large white eggs in cartons will average in the mid- to upper 80s during the first 3 months of 1996. During the second quarter, these prices will likely range in the upper 70s to low 80s. Prices in the second quarter will probably be affected positively by the fact that Easter is about 2 weeks later this year than in 1995.

The number of hens and pullets on farms Dec. 1, 1995, was about the same as it was Dec. 1, 1994. Total egg production in November was 1 percent less than a year ago, but table egg production was about the same as in November 1994. These figures, plus the relative retail egg movement and commercial egg movement, explain the higher prices than last year.

Changes in future egg production seem to be inconsistent. The egg-type chick hatch in November was 12 percent above November 1994. In contrast, the hatch in October was about the same as a year ago.

Capitol Corner, continued from page 3

STATE ISSUE

Insurance anti-fraud bill

House Bill 4682, sponsored by Rep. Eric Bush (R-Battle Creek), has passed the Senate and the House and is awaiting Gov. Engler's expected approval. The legislation will make insurance fraud a felony punishable by imprisonment of up to four years and/or a \$50,000 fine. Anyone conspiring to commit fraud will be guilty of a felony of no more than 10 years and/or a \$50,000 fine. In addition, it will allow insurance companies to share information about insurance fraud with law enforcement officials. Finally, it will provide immunity from civil liability for persons or organizations providing information regarding fraudulent acts.

The National Insurance Crime Bureau estimates that 10 percent of all casualty insurance claims are fraudulent. These acts cost policyholders nearly \$20 billion annually nationwide. Insurance fraud includes, but is not limited to, incomplete or misleading claims for insurance benefits.

MFB Position: Michigan Farm Bureau supports H.B. 4682.

MFB Contact: Tim Goodrich, ext. 2048.

Wetlands program runs out of money

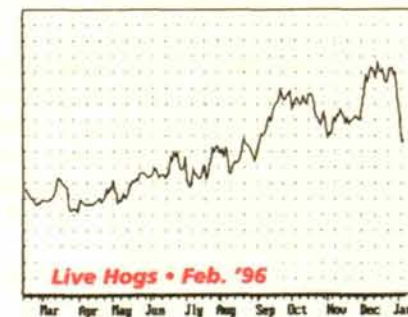
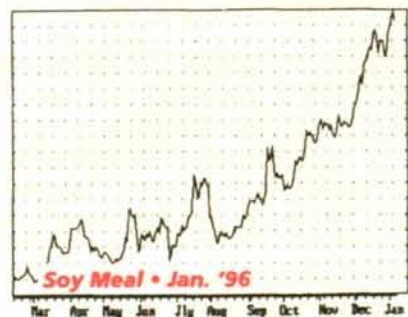
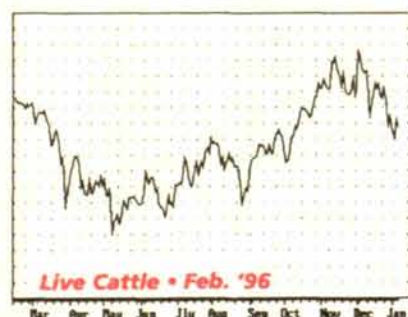
An emergency wetlands reserve program, which was intended to turn farmland into wetlands, will not be able to accommodate the amount of land enrolled in the program because administrators said there is not enough money.

The program, offered to farmers in Missouri who were flooded in the spring of 1993, became too popular after many farmers were again flooded last year. With the original offer, farmers submitted 12,826 acres of farmland to be eligible for the one-time conservation easement, but more than 37,000 acres were offered after last year's flooding. The interest was so high that enrollment in the program had to be canceled one month before the Dec. 31 deadline.

"It far, far exceeded our expectations as far as the level of interest from producers willing to take their land out of production, restore it to wetlands and have a permanent easement placed on their land," said Al Green, wetlands program coordinator for the Missouri Natural Resources Conservation Service office.

Green said he can only be certain that NRCS can pay for about 10,000 acres signed up for the program this year. Buying easements on the remaining acres would cost about \$27 million, and those acres would have to compete with easement applicants in Iowa, where the program also was very popular.

COMMODITY PRICE TRENDS



House Ag Committee approves Farm Credit System reform bill

The Agriculture Committee has approved a bill to reform the Farm Credit System intended to make the lending system more competitive.

"Enacting this measure will save money by eliminating unnecessary regulatory burdens on lenders ... and ultimately benefit American farmers and ranchers who are financed by Farm Credit," said Bill Weber, Farm Credit Council head.

The Farm Credit System Regulatory Relief Act would extend the current 12-month minimum examination period of institutions to 18 months. It also would reduce the cost of Farm Credit participation in secondary markets.

In addition, the bill would reform the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation ("Farmer Mac") by allowing it to purchase agricultural mortgages directly from lenders and incorporate them into securities, terminate the requirement for maintenance of a minimum 10 percent cash reserve, and stall the pending increases in regulatory capital requirements for three years. Action on the Senate version of the bill is still pending.

Weed Strategies

by Karen A. Renner,
Department of
Crop and Soil
Sciences, Michigan
State University



The recent development of the Roundup-Ready soybean, genetically engineered to be resistant to postemergence applications of Roundup, will expand the utility of Roundup in conventional and no-till soybean production.

Annual Weed Control

Roundup at 1 pint/acre provides excellent control of cocklebur, jimsonweed, common ragweed, wild mustard and the foxtails. Roundup at 1.5 pints/acre controls redroot and smooth pigweed, smartweed, black nightshade, large crabgrass and barnyardgrass. Roundup should be applied to black nightshade, barnyardgrass, and large crabgrass before they exceed 4 inches in height.

Common lambsquarters and velvetleaf are more difficult to control. Two pints/acre of Roundup has provided more consistent control than lower application rates.

Roundup-Ready soybeans

Roundup should be applied for annual weed control when the weeds are 4 to 5 inches in height. Do not let the weeds compete with soybeans for longer than five weeks or soybean yield may be reduced from the early season weed competition. Always add nonionic surfactant at 1/2 percent v/v with Roundup. The addition of ammonium sulfate or 28 percent liquid nitrogen has improved control of crabgrass, lambsquarters and velvetleaf in university research. The new Roundup formulation, Roundup Ultra, contains nonionic surfactant, and Monsanto does not recommend adding additional surfactant. However, a nitrogen source can still be added.

Perennial Weed Control

Roundup is labeled for control of many perennial weeds. Perennial grasses like quackgrass are controlled by Roundup at 2 to 4 pints/acre. Yellow nutsedge will be controlled for one season by applications of Roundup at 2 pints/acre. Perennial broadleaf weeds, such as Canada thistle, field bindweed, and hemp dogbane, require higher application rates of Roundup, applied when the plants are in flower, to effectively control the underground root system of these weeds. Therefore, applications of 2 pints/acre of Roundup in Roundup Ready soybeans will control these perennial broadleaf weeds for one season, but do not expect eradication into the following years.

If perennial broadleaf weeds are a problem in the field, apply 1.5 to 2 pints/acre of Roundup when annual weeds are 4 to 5 inches tall. Then make a second 2 pt/acre application of Roundup a few weeks later when most of the perennial broadleaf

plants have emerged from all the 'pieces' of the underground root system. In a no-till system, the emergence would be more uniform than in a conventional till system. If making a single application of Roundup for control of both annual weeds and perennial broadleaf weeds, don't delay the application longer than 6 weeks after soybean planting because: 1) the annual and perennial weeds will already be competitive with soybeans and 2) some annual weeds such as crabgrass, lambsquarters, black nightshade and velvetleaf are more difficult to control when they exceed 4 inches in height.

Tank mixtures with Roundup

The Roundup Ready label will not recommend tank mixtures. In university research, tank mixtures of Roundup with other postemergence herbicides sometimes increased and sometimes decreased velvetleaf control. Velvetleaf control was improved by the addition of Basagran or Resource but was not improved by the addition of Pursuit, Pinnacle, or Classic. Michigan State University suggests applying Roundup at 2 pt/Acre plus a nitrogen source to 4 inch velvetleaf. Resource can be applied sequentially for velvetleaf control, if needed.

The Roundup-Ready Label

Roundup can be applied from soybean cracking through full flower in Roundup-Ready soybeans. Roundup can be applied more than once during this time period, but the total amount of Roundup that can be applied during this time period is 2 quarts/acre. The label will suggest 1.5 pint/acre on weeds less than 6 inches tall with a footnote to apply this rate to 4-inch black nightshade.

The label will suggest sequential applications of Roundup in 30-inch-row soybeans if needed. Drilled soybeans will close the canopy faster and fewer weeds will emerge following the Roundup application. In university research, weed control was better in drilled soybeans when compared to 30-inch-row soybeans because Roundup, like many other postemergence soybean herbicides, does not have soil residual to stop later germinating weeds.

Other Issues

It is critical that Roundup drift not occur. Apply Roundup when winds are below 5 mph. Corn and sugar beets are very sensitive to off-target Roundup. Be sure that sprayers are cleaned out thoroughly following Roundup applications. Be sure fields are well marked where the Roundup-Ready seed is planted.

Roundup will provide soybean growers a new postemergence weed control option in soybeans. It is the best option growers have for managing perennial weeds in the soybean crop. Roundup applications in Roundup-Ready soybeans will be a cost-effective weed control program with no concern for groundwater or surface water contamination or toxicity to humans or animals.

The soybean varieties with the Roundup-Ready gene must have the yield potential and important agronomic characteristics of the elite lines growers are currently planting. If these varieties are available, Roundup-Ready soybeans will be adopted by many farmers for weed management in soybeans.

Business Outlook

John D. Jones, Telfarm Director and District Extension Farm Management Agent, Department of Agricultural Economics, Michigan State University Extension

The following article was taken from a paper written by Dr. Ian M. Brookes, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. Dr. Brookes is just completing a sabbatical with the Department of Animal and Food Sciences, University of Vermont and presented the paper on Jan. 3, 1996 at Michigan State University. Since every farm and country have differing circumstances, this is not to be considered prescriptive, but rather information to help avoid misunderstandings and to aid in future management decisions.

To learn more about grazing systems in the Great Lakes area and to talk with current graziers, you are encouraged to attend the tri-state "Great Lakes Grazing Conference" on Feb. 19 and 20, 1996, at the Stouffer Hotel, Battle Creek, Mich. sponsored by Ohio, Purdue and Michigan Cooperative Extension Services. For more information about the Great Lakes Grazing Conference and registration material, call (906) 439-5880.

Dairy Production in New Zealand: A Comparison with the U.S.

The New Zealand dairy industry is internationally recognized as being a low-cost producer of milk products. This is because production systems are based almost entirely on grazed pastures which, through favorable climatic conditions, are available year-round. Nevertheless, the success of any business venture should be judged by the margin between costs and returns. Production levels on a per cow basis are low by international standards. Feeding and management strategies, which can increase farm productivity without a proportional increase in costs, are thus of great interest to the dairy farmer.

The following thumbnail sketch is designed to provide a basis for comparing N.Z. and U.S. dairy systems and indicate possible directions in which they may develop.

The New Zealand Dairy Industry

New Zealand is a small country, approximately 100,000 sq. miles in area (about the size of Colorado). 65 percent of the land area is devoted to agriculture, in particular, pastoral farming. Almost half the total value of traded exports is derived from animal products, with dairy accounting for about 20 percent of the total.

New Zealand produces less than 2 percent of the world's milk, but 90 percent of the total production is exported and this accounts for 20-25 percent

Comparisons with New Zealand dairy production

of the world trade in dairy products. The N.Z. dairy industry is therefore very vulnerable to changes in the world market price.

The industry is a cooperative one, with farmers supplying milk to their local dairy companies. The New Zealand Dairy Board, which is owned by the companies, exports milk overseas as a single desk seller and returns a payout based on prices received on the world market. Individual companies pay farmers at a level based on this return, adjusted for product sales on the deregulated home market and their production costs. Most companies now pay on a milk fat and protein basis less a volume cost. No subsidies in the form of Government, price support or export incentives are received.

The U.S. has 3.5 times as many cows and produces 8 times as much milk as N.Z. Yields per cow are over double but herd size is less than half the N.Z. average, so that milk production per herd is similar. This is achieved in N.Z. with a much lower labor input — one person being responsible on average for 135 cows.

The following table shows the number of cows and milk production for the N.Z. and U.S. dairy industries.

Production Statistics

	N.Z.	U.S.
Land Area (mil. sq. m.)	0.10	3.62
Milking Cows (mil.)	2.7	9.5
Herds (x 000)	14.5	117.6
Cows/Herd	188	81
Milk (mil. lb.)	19.8	153.6
Milk/Cow (lb.)	7,250	16,130
Milk/Herd (mil. lb.)	1.36	1.31

New Zealand Production Systems

Over 90 percent of N.Z. dairy farmers calve their herds in the spring (July and August) and produce milk for manufacturing into exported products. The remaining 10 percent (approx. 1,400 herds) have winter contracts to provide liquid milk for domestic consumption from fall calved cows. The choice of seasonal spring calving is an attempt to match the herd's pattern of feed demand with pasture growth. New Zealand has a temperate climate, with 80 percent of the country receiving over 40 inches of rain per year and with a temperature range of 25-90°F. In the North Island, where almost 90 percent of the herds are located, grass can grow 365 days of the year.

Calving usually starts about 4-6 weeks before the main flush of spring growth and the aim is to have all cows calve within 8-10 weeks. By building up a bank of feed from pasture grown during the late winter, it should be possible to feed fresh cows on grazing alone, although many farmers may use nitrogen fertilizer in early spring to boost pasture growth. When pasture surpluses begin to appear in early summer, paddocks are removed from the grazing rotation to be conserved as silage or hay.

The final decision to dry off the herd is based on a combination of factors — the current milk yield, the body condition of the cows, the pasture cover over the farm and the time until next calving. Most herds are dry for three months or more over winter. During this time, cows are fed restricted amounts of fresh pasture together with supplementary feeds — usually silage or hay. Feed budgeting is often practiced to help plan the winter management, so that cows calve with adequate body condition and with sufficient pasture cover to allow full pasture feeding in early lactation.

Continued on page 13

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HEALTH HARVEST

New laser surgery for myopia



The physician's perspective

by Anthony P. Adamis, MD

If you're nearsighted, how do you decide between keeping your corrective lenses, having radial keratotomy (RK), or trying the new laser procedure?

First of all, it's clear that eyeglasses and contact lenses work extremely well to correct myopia, or nearsightedness, with relatively few problems. Some people who develop an allergic reaction to their contacts may be unable to wear them. For those patients, glasses are always an option. But there will still be some people who prefer not to wear glasses, or can't for occupational reasons, as well as others who are able to wear contacts but don't like the time and money it takes to maintain them. For them, surgery may be an option.

Not everyone who is nearsighted is a candidate for refractive surgery — that is, surgery to correct how the eye focuses light. People who are very nearsighted, whose vision is constantly changing, who have a coexisting eye disease, or who are prone

to scarring should not have either RK or laser keratectomy. Clinical trials are underway to study the effectiveness of the laser procedure for moderate-to-severe myopia, but so far it appears that it is less predictable for treating serious nearsightedness.

For those who are eligible for refractive surgery, there are a number of factors to consider. One of the potential benefits, certainly, is that both RK and PRK have been generally successful at freeing many patients from having to wear corrective lenses. Recent studies show that 91 percent of people who have had the laser surgery obtain visual acuity of 20/40 or better after one treatment — in many states, good enough to drive without glasses — and about 65 percent end up with "perfect" 20/20 vision. RK has had similar success, with 88 percent of patients achieving 20/40 and 60 percent 20/20 acuity.

Although costs may vary from doctor to doctor, the two procedures cost roughly the same, about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per eye, and are not usually covered by insurance. Both take about 30 minutes, and patients can go home immediately, though vision can remain unstable for up to three months.

It's important to remember that no surgical procedure is risk-free. As with any surgery, both RK and laser keratectomy carry a small risk of postoperative infections. In addition, with RK, scarring from the incisions can cause some people to see halos or

starbursts around lights at night. With PRK, a small number of patients may experience glare caused by a fine haze in the cornea, which usually clears up in three to six months.

There is also a risk with either procedure that vision may become worse after surgery. A recent study showed that about one in 250 patients who had PRK could read one less line on a standard eye chart. No-one lost the ability to read more than two lines. In a 10-year follow-up of 435 people who had RK in 1982 and 1983, 43 percent reported that their vision continued to shift so that they became more farsighted (unable to see close objects clearly) over time, and in about 13 percent, vision shifted between morning and evening. With both procedures, there is also the chance that the surgeon will under- or overcorrect so that a person remains nearsighted or becomes farsighted.

Because there is concern that the cuts used in RK may weaken the eye and in rare cases cause it to rupture, people who might be at risk of occupational or recreational eye trauma (professional athletes or those who play racquetball or tennis, for example) should generally stay away from this procedure. These patients may be better candidates for laser keratectomy, which is less invasive — that is, no incisions are made in the cornea. Therefore, the eye is less vulnerable to trauma-related injuries.

For many people who are nearsighted, the dream of waking up in the morning and reading the clock without having to put on glasses or contact lenses is a powerful one — so powerful, in fact, that they are willing to let a surgeon operate on their otherwise-healthy eyes to gain sharper vision.

For the last 15 years, the procedure of choice for those wanting corrective surgery has been radial keratotomy (RK), in which an ophthalmologist makes a series of cuts arrayed like spokes in the cornea, the clear covering of the eye, to flatten it and bring distant images into sharper focus.

In late October, the Food and Drug Administration approved a laser that gives ophthalmologists a new approach to vision-correcting surgery, called photorefractive keratectomy (PRK). In this procedure, a surgeon uses the laser to vaporize a microscopic layer of the cornea, about one-third the thickness of a human hair. Like RK, this too flattens the eye and improves its ability to focus.

Some researchers who have worked with the laser technique say that it is safer and more precise than RK and produces better results. Although it is not yet widely available, clinics nationwide are poised to launch a major effort promoting PRK.

In considering either type of surgery, an important caveat is that up to 30 percent of patients may still have to wear their glasses for distance. Furthermore, because refractive surgery changes the shape of the cornea, people who could wear contacts beforehand may no longer be able to get lenses to fit properly afterward.

Choosing between RK and the laser procedure is a complex decision. While laser keratectomy appears to be equivalent to RK in cost, safety, effectiveness, and side effects, it has the clear advantage that it doesn't weaken the eye or cause vision to shift over time. However, unlike RK, which has been used on thousands of patients over 15 years, what we know about laser keratectomy comes from studies involving fewer patients followed for less time.

Laser keratectomy is a promising alternative to corrective surgery for nearsightedness. It's too early to tell whether overall it's clearly superior to RK. Thus, except in cases where RK's eye-weakening effects make it unacceptable, the choice is largely one of personal preference. I'd advise patients to talk with one or more ophthalmologists who have experience with both procedures before making a decision. For more information, contact: American Academy of Ophthalmology, San Francisco, (415) 561-8500. ■



Increase your life expectancy!

Use this test to estimate your life expectancy — and discover ways to live a longer, healthier life.

Humans have lived as long as 110 years or more — and each time a new record is set, everyone wants to know how that person managed to do it. Limiting risk factors such as smoking, weight and cholesterol, as well as maintaining a well-balanced diet and exercising regularly are the basics to leading an extended life span.

What is more interesting to note is the increase in the average human life span since the end of the 1700s. At that time, the average life span was 35 or 40 years of age. Today, the average life span has more than doubled to over 75 years of age. The number of Americans over the age of 65 doubled in the 30 years between 1950 and 1980 — largely because of continuing advances in medical science, education and nutrition.

The following test will help provide an estimate on your life expectancy by incorporating many factors that influence male and female life expectancy. (Note that the test is not intended for people who currently have coronary heart disease or cancer.)

A few items that may affect longevity, such as family history of premature death and regular use of low-dose aspirin, were not included in this test simply because there is not yet enough data to measure their impact on total mortality.

Reprinted with permission from *Consumer Reports on Health*, December 1995.

After you've calculated your current life expectancy, try recalculating it to see how much longer you could expect to live if you improved your health habits or your risk factors. Note that improved habits also have certain benefits — such as keeping you physically, psychologically, and even mentally fit — that won't show up on any longevity test.

How to figure your life expectancy

If your risk score matches one of the scores at the top of a column, simply look down that column until you find your life expectancy, or probable years left to live. If your score falls between two of the column-header scores, you can estimate your life expectancy by finding the column-header score that's closest to your own score and extrapolating from there. For a more precise estimate, follow the steps below. (The example is based on a 55-year-old woman with a risk score of 16.)

1. Subtract your risk score from the next highest score in the headers at the top of the column. (Example: $20 - 16 = 4$)
2. Divide the result by 10. ($4 \div 10 = 0.4$)
3. Find the row for your age. Look across that row until you hit the two life expectancies under the two column-header scores closest to your own score. Find the difference between those life expectancies. ($41 - 31 = 10$)
4. Multiply that difference by the result of step 2, rounding to the nearest whole number. ($10 \times 0.4 = 4$)
5. Add that result to the lower life expectancy. ($31 + 4 = 35$)

The test, based on the best available studies of mortality rates, was created for us by Ted Pass, Ph.D., president of StrateCision Inc., a Wellesley, Mass., firm specializing in medical-risk assessment.

- **Add or subtract points for every "yes" answer to items 1-8.**
- | | Women | Men |
|---|----------|----------|
| 1. Exercise | | |
| Do you get little or no regular exercise? Plus 3 | Plus 3 | Plus 3 |
| 2. Weight | | |
| Calculate your body mass index (BMI) with the following formula: Multiply your weight in pounds by 705. Divide the result by your height in inches. Then divide by your height in inches again. | | |
| Is your BMI less than 22? Plus 4 | Plus 4 | Plus 5 |
| Is your BMI greater than 30? Plus 1 | Plus 1 | Plus 3 |
| 3. Diabetes | | |
| Do you have diabetes? Plus 7 | Plus 7 | Plus 7 |
| 4. Smoking | | |
| If you're an ex-smoker, did you quit in the past five years? Plus 1 | Plus 1 | Plus 1 |
| If you smoke, do you smoke fewer than 15 cigarettes a day? Plus 3 | Plus 3 | Plus 3 |
| Do you smoke 15 to 24 cigarettes a day? Plus 6 | Plus 6 | Plus 6 |
| Do you smoke more than 24 cigarettes a day? Plus 8 | Plus 8 | Plus 8 |
| 5. Estrogen | | |
| If you're a postmenopausal woman, are you currently taking estrogen? Minus 3 | Minus 3 | |
| 6. Alcohol | | |
| If you're a man, do you consume some alcohol, but less than three drinks per day? Minus 1 | | Minus 1 |
| Men and women: Do you consume more than four drinks per day? Plus 7 | Plus 7 | Plus 3 |
| 7. Dietary fat | | |
| Do you eat a low-fat diet, minimizing your intake of fatty meat, full-fat dairy products, and other high-fat foods? Minus 2 | Minus 2 | Minus 2 |
| 8. Total cholesterol | | |
| If you're a man over age 65, is your total-cholesterol level less than 160 mg/dl? Plus 2 | | Plus 2 |
| If you're a man under age 50, is your total-cholesterol level greater than 240 mg/dl? Plus 2 | | Plus 2 |
| ■ Add up your points so far. Subtotal | Subtotal | Subtotal |
| ■ Now do the calculations in items 9-12, rounding to the nearest whole number. | | |
| 9. Waist-to-hip ratio | | |
| If you're a woman, divide the circumference of your waist at its narrowest point by the circumference of your hips at the widest point on your buttocks. Multiply the result by 22.4. Plus | Plus | |
| 10. HDL cholesterol | | |
| Multiply your HDL cholesterol level by 0.28 if you're a woman, 0.14 if you're a man. If you don't know your HDL level, simply insert the following points in the spaces at right: Minus 16 points for women, minus 7 points for men. (Numbers based on the average HDL values of 56 for women, 47 for men.) Minus | Minus | Minus |
| 11. Fruits and vegetables | | |
| Multiply the number of servings of fruits and vegetables you eat in a typical day by 0.7. Minus | Minus | Minus |
| 12. Blood pressure | | |
| Multiply your systolic pressure (the higher number) by 0.15 for women, 0.14 for men Plus | Plus | Plus |
| ■ Add up your points for items 9-12. Subtotal | Subtotal | Subtotal |
| ■ Add subtotals to find total score, then see table at right. Total | Total | Total |

Score	-10	0	10	20	30	40	50	60
Age	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
30	77	71	73	62	65	51	55	40
31	76	70	72	61	64	50	54	39
32	75	69	71	60	63	49	53	38
33	74	68	70	59	62	48	52	37
34	73	67	69	58	61	47	51	36
35	72	66	68	57	60	46	50	35
36	71	65	67	56	59	45	49	34
37	70	64	66	55	58	44	48	33
38	69	63	65	54	57	43	47	32
39	68	62	64	53	56	42	46	31
40	67	61	63	52	55	41	45	30
41	66	60	62	51	54	40	44	29
42	65	59	61	50	53	39	43	28
43	64	58	60	49	52	38	42	27
44	63	57	59	48	51	37	41	26
45	62	56	58	47	50	36	40	25
46	61	55	57	46	49	35	39	24
47	60	54	56	45	48	34	38	23
48	59	53	55	44	47	33	37	22
49	58	52	54	43	46	32	36	21
50	57	51	53	42	45	31	35	20
51	56	50	52	41	44	30	34	19
52	55	49	51	40	43	29	33	18
53	54	48	50	39	42	28	32	17
54	53	47	49	38	41	27	31	16
55	52	46	48	37	40	26	30	15
56	51	45	47	36	39	25	29	14
57	50	44	46	35	38	24	28	13
58	49	43	45	34	37	23	27	12
59	48	42	44	33	36	22	26	11
60	47	41	43	32	35	21	25	10
61	46	40	42	31	34	20	24	9
62	45	39	41	30	33	19	23	8
63	44	38	40	29	32	18	22	7
64	43	37	39	28	31	17	21	6
65	42	36	38	27	30	16	20	5
66	41	35	37	26	29	15	19	4
67	40	34	36	25	28	14	18	3
68	39	33	35	24	27	13	17	2
69	38	32	34	23	26	12	16	1
70	37	31	33	22	25	11	15	<1
71	36	30	32	21	24	10	14	<1
72	35	29	31	20	23	9	13	<1
73	34	28	30	19	22	8	12	<1
74	33	27	29	18	21	7	11	<1
75	32	26	28	17	20	6	10	<1
76	31	25	27	16	19	5	9	<1
77	30	24	26	15	18	4	8	<1
78	29	23	25	14	17	3	7	<1
79	28	22	24	13	16	2	6	<1
80	27	21	23	12	15	1	5	<1

Student athletes often prone to body image problems and eating disorders

School sports can influence how students view their own bodies, says a body image researcher at Ohio State University. While sports participation may increase self-esteem, Nancy Ann Rudd says it also may prompt athletes to practice risky behaviors regarding weight control and athletic performance.

In her ongoing research focusing on adolescent athletes and body image, Rudd has found evidence that certain sports trigger some students to fast, restrict liquids, and force themselves to vomit, as well as use diet aids, laxatives and steroids.

A recent study confirmed that emphasis on body size may have a severely negative effect on the self-image of many high school athletes. Rudd conducted the study with graduate student Adam Tobias, and it was co-directed by Ruth Dohner, associate professor of home economics education.

The study was based on a random sample of 287 students, ages 14 to 20, from three metropolitan high schools. Of those, 73 percent participated in school sports; all the others exercised, jogged or otherwise informally participated in athletics.

Of those participating in school sports, 22 percent admitted they had tried starvation diets or some other form of eating disorder in order to maintain body size, Rudd says.

This number contributes to the total number of those with eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia, and is higher than the percentage practicing these behaviors in the general population, Rudd says.

There were more body image concerns and stronger food monitoring among those who participated in sports that emphasize leanness than among those in sports that did not, Rudd says. Those emphasizing leanness were gymnastics, wrestling, diving, ballet, cross-country running, dancing, judo, swimming and skating. Sports that did not emphasize leanness were basketball, football, track, soccer, volleyball, softball, tennis and hockey.

However, when the researchers examined the data according to gender, girls appeared to be at risk no matter what sport they participated in, Rudd says. "Unfortunately, we expected this finding,"

Rudd says. "Our culture tends to emphasize a double standard of weight control behaviors between women and men."

Sport programs that promote elitism, winning, or those that use weight-loss programs to enhance performance often promote eating disorders and negative body images, Rudd says.

While 10 percent to 15 percent of adolescent girls in general are estimated to be anorexic and an additional 20 percent are bulimic, such disorders among athletes may be higher. It's estimated that half of all adolescent female gymnasts have an eating disorder.

Adolescent boys in general are at less risk, but this behavior is more common in certain sports, such as wrestling.

The reason that many people develop eating disorders is because of a negative body image, Rudd says. This picture can be influenced by a number of outside forces.

"Body image is our mental picture of what we look like and our emotional response to that image," Rudd says.

It's a very fragile concept. A single comment, even one made unwittingly, can destroy an adolescent's body image, she says.

Besides sports, two other major influences affect a teen's body image, Rudd says.

The first is the adolescent stage of life itself. During this stage of development, teens begin to ask questions about their bodies and how they look. They begin to compare their bodies to the cultural ideals they see all around them in the media, Rudd says.

Second, peer pressure to be thin plays an important role in a teen's body image. Teenagers may respond from pressures exerted by coaches, teachers or friends much more quickly than older people might.

"If you're satisfied with your body image you'll tend to do less altering, but if your emotional response is negative, you will likely engage in dangerous behaviors," Rudd says.

In the adult population, examples of these risky behaviors include cosmetic surgeries such as breast enlargement or reduction, liposuction or permanent makeup, or obsessive exercise.



Why are so few organs available for transplantation in the United States?



It had been thought that doctors were simply neglecting to ask surviving family members for permission to use organs and tissues. A new study indicates that when families are asked, most refuse — even when the deceased

had signed an organ donor card.

Family members have the last say. Lesson: Be sure your family knows your exact wishes, and that they agree to carry them out.

Source: Dr. Laura Siminoff and Dr. Robert Arnold, University of Pittsburgh.



Placing infants on their backs or sides to sleep is an important way to help prevent SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Babies who are put to sleep face down have nearly four times the

risk of dying of SIDS — likely due to suffocation.

If you have a "spitty baby," tuck a rolled towel behind the infant so he or she sleeps slightly on his or her side.

In the United States, about 6,000 infants die from SIDS every year. It's the No. 1 cause of deaths for babies under age one.

Source: National SIDS Foundation.

What are my surgical options for treatment of nearsightedness, astigmatism, and farsightedness?

by Thomas K. Moore, MD

There are several options available now for treatment of nearsightedness and astigmatism. Most of the surgical options that are now available for treatment of farsightedness have shown a significant incidence of complications, and they are procedures that I do not currently recommend.

The most thoroughly evaluated procedure for treatment of nearsightedness is radial keratotomy. This involves making peripheral incisions in the cornea to flatten the cornea and eliminate nearsightedness. There is good long-term safety data regarding this procedure, and it is currently the standard by which other techniques should be measured.

For people that have a high degree of nearsightedness, beyond the range of what radial keratotomy can correct, automated lamellar keratoplasty (ALK) can be used. This is a relatively new

Healthy Bites



Women who drink two or more cups of caffeinated coffee a day throughout their lives have an increased risk of developing osteoporosis (brittle bones). But the risk

appears to be cancelled if a woman also drinks at least one glass of milk a day.

"The message is: If you're going to drink your coffee, drink your milk, too."

Women should try to get 1,200 mg. to 1,500 mg. of calcium a day. One cup of nonfat milk supplies 90 calories and 300 mg. of calcium.

Source: Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 271, No. 4.



To keep your hands warm in icy weather, wear mittens, not gloves. Mittens are warmer because they keep your fingers together and have less surface area from which heat can escape.

The added warmth is worth the loss in dexterity. You can also wear special inner liners made of polypropylene or another material that draws sweat from your skin.

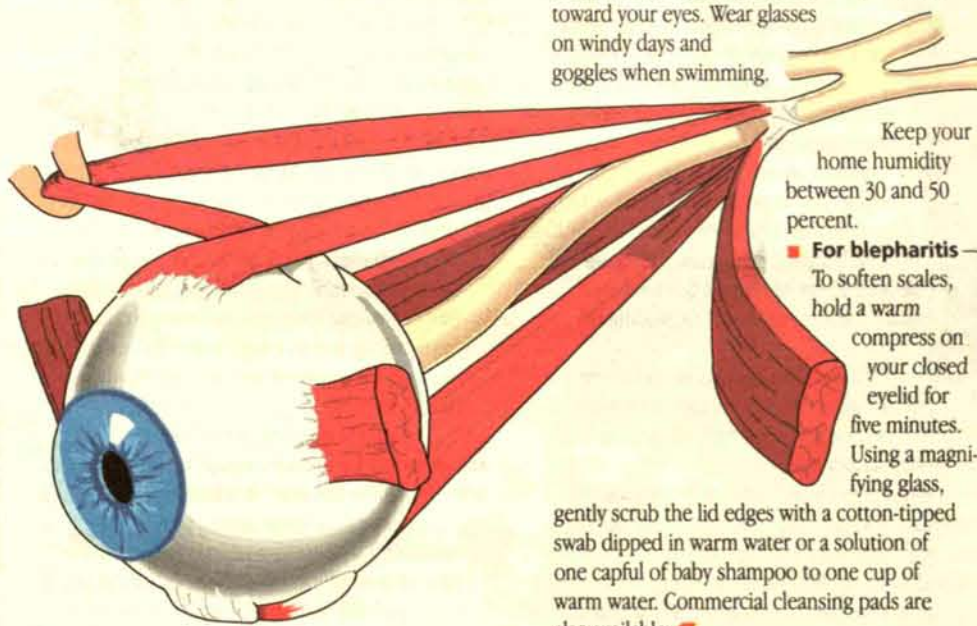
When exercising outdoors on a cold day, don't overdress. Exercise raises body temperature significantly — even a moderate workout can make you feel that it's 30°F warmer than it really is. So, when you're about to run on a 25°F day, dress for about 55°F. In other words, dress so that you're slightly chilled when you first go out — once you start exercising, you'll warm up. And layer your clothing — that allows you to unzip and/or remove clothes in order to lower your body temperature during strenuous exertion.

Soothing irritated eyes

Here are tips for managing minor eye problems:

■ **For irritated and teary eyes** — Apply a warm compress four times a day for 10 minutes. Don't rub your eyes. For allergic irritation, a prescription eyedrop, such as naphazoline (Naphcon-A) or ketorolac tromethamine (Acular) may help. Mascara can become contaminated with skin bacteria transferred by the applicator. To minimize risk, replace mascara every six months.

■ **For dry eyes** — Use an artificial tear preparation. Choose a preservative-free product such as Cellufresh, Tears Naturale Free or Bion Hypotears PF. Some over-the-counter eyedrops contain vasoconstrictors and can cause further drying. Use these products no more than three to five days. Don't smoke; avoid tobacco smoke and other air irritants. Don't direct hair dryers toward your eyes. Wear glasses on windy days and goggles when swimming.



Keep your home humidity between 30 and 50 percent.

■ **For blepharitis** — To soften scales, hold a warm compress on your closed eyelid for five minutes. Using a magnifying glass,

gently scrub the lid edges with a cotton-tipped swab dipped in warm water or a solution of one capful of baby shampoo to one cup of warm water. Commercial cleansing pads are also available.

Office Calls

procedure in the United States. Recent evidence indicates that further follow-up studies regarding long-term safety needs to be done before this procedure can be highly recommended.

Excimer laser technology should be available within one to two years in the United States. This is a new technique involving laser energy to shave off a central portion of the cornea to reduce or eliminate nearsightedness. This technology was invented in the United States and is now used in many countries throughout Europe, South America and Canada. There is not enough good long-term data regarding the laser; however, within the next one to two years, this data may be forthcoming. As excimer laser surgery becomes refined, it may become the preferred technique for treating highly nearsighted patients. For people in the mild to moderate range of nearsightedness, some people may be good candidates for laser and others may be better candidates for radial keratotomy. Excimer laser technology also holds promise in the future for people who are farsighted. Correction of vision disorders, using surgical approaches, is a rapidly changing area of medicine.

I think it is important to be aware of advertising claims, as the marketing of these techniques will

be intense over the next few years. Discuss these options carefully with an ophthalmologist who is doing these types of procedures to help you evaluate which is the best surgical option for you.

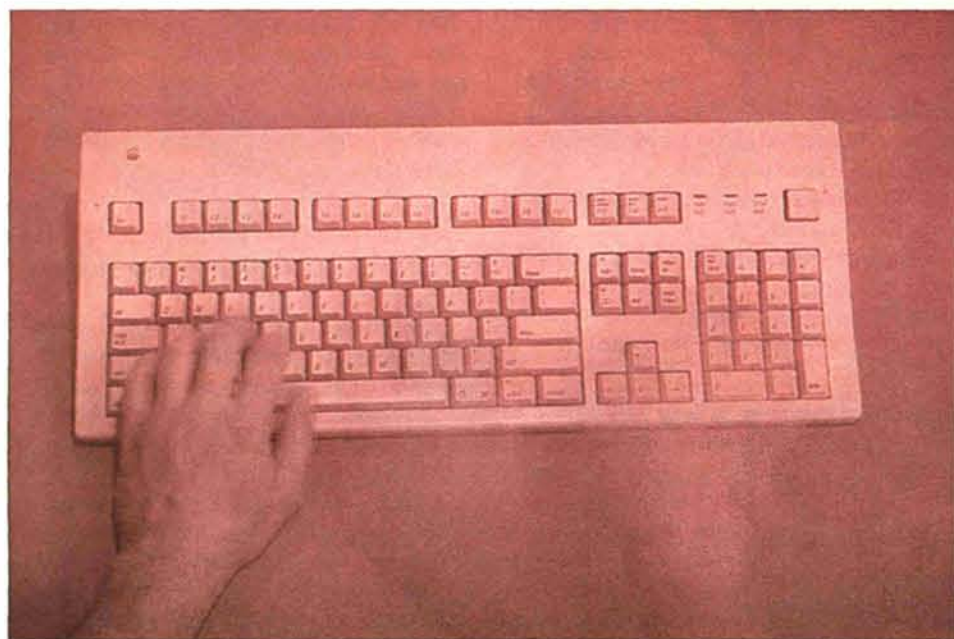
Dr. Moore is an ophthalmology specialist with Lansing Ophthalmology with an office located at 2001 Coolidge Road, East Lansing.



Medical Focus

Overuse strain injury

Progressive conditions respond to simple care



George is in charge of his family reunion. Suddenly, the computer usually reserved for keeping track of his finances and writing an occasional letter is doing overtime. In one week-end, George spent 12 hours working at his computer researching sites for the gathering, writing a newsletter and compiling a family history.

Maria is an amateur musician, but finding time to practice is difficult with her busy schedule. She's been asked to play her violin at a friend's anniversary party. So she decides to spend most of the weekend sharpening her skills and expanding her repertoire.

What do George and Maria have in common? Both are at risk of overuse strain injuries — painful but often preventable conditions.

You may associate overuse injuries with the workplace. Factory employees, keyboard operators and meat cutters are among those most commonly affected by injury. But the motions required for their jobs are imitated in many of your daily activities.

Most obvious symptom is pain

An overuse strain injury results from overusing muscles and tendons. Most of these injuries occur in your hand, wrist and arm. The most noticeable symptom is pain. But an overuse injury can also cause tingling, weakness, numbness, swelling and stiffness.

Injury may be caused by more than just repetition. You're more likely to become injured if you aren't conditioned for prolonged activities or your movements are combined with forcefulness or an awkward position.

Common conditions

Overuse strain injuries include a variety of injuries to tendons and muscles. These four are among the most common:

■ **Carpal tunnel syndrome** — The carpal tunnel is a passageway under the carpal ligament in your wrist that contains the median nerve and the tendons that bend your fingers. Overuse can cause swelling of the membrane linings (sheaths) surrounding the tendons. Swelling compresses the median nerve.

The result is numbness, tingling or pain starting in the wrist and moving down into your thumb and first three fingers or back toward your elbow. Symptoms may be worse at night.

Computer users like George are the stereotype of people who

get carpal tunnel syndrome. But it can affect people who spend long periods with their wrists in flexed or extended positions, especially if their movements include pinching or gripping.

People who work as grocery clerks, factory employees or mechanics may be prone to this injury. But hobbyists like Maria can develop carpal tunnel syndrome through activities such as playing certain musical instruments, needlework and canoeing. The combination of pressure and vibration such as using an electric drill, lawn mower or snowblower can also cause carpal tunnel syndrome.

■ **Tennis elbow** — You don't have to spend time on the courts to have this condition. Any combination of rotating your wrist and using force — from playing golf to using a manual screwdriver — can cause a form of epicondylitis (ep-ih-kon-duh-LI-tis).

The pain begins near your elbow and may move toward the outside of your forearm. The actual injury may be tiny tears in the tendons that attach the muscles of your lower arm to your elbow.

■ **Tendinitis** — The cause of an inflamed tendon near your wrist, elbow or shoulder is most often excessive exercise, beyond what you're used to. Repeated movements such as using a paintbrush above shoulder level contribute to this type of injury.

When tendinitis affects your shoulder, pain can cause you to limit range of motion. In turn, tendinitis can progress to a "frozen shoulder," in which ligaments and tendons near the joint continue to stiffen until the joint barely moves.

■ **Trigger finger** — A popping or catching sensation when you bend your finger is the source of the nickname for this type of tenosynovitis (ten-o-sin-o-VI-tis). However, tenosynovitis can also affect your wrist or shoulder.

When it occurs in your hand, tenosynovitis results from swelling of the tendon sheath in your finger or thumb, preventing the tendon from gliding easily through the membrane lining. Countless repetitions of the same hand movements can cause the inflammation.

Early treatment means early cure

Treating an overuse injury can be as easy as taking over-the-counter pain relievers and stopping for rest breaks at the first sign of pain. The further an injury progresses, the more aggressive the care.

To prevent an overuse injury from getting worse:

■ **Treat the pain** — Apply heat or cold to ease the pain. As tolerated, take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen sodium.

■ **Rest** — Don't keep pushing yourself in spite of your pain. Overuse injuries usually heal if you stop the activity that's aggravating the condition. It may take several weeks for the pain to go away completely.



■ **Immobilize the injured area** — One way to stop the pain is to wear a splint that prohibits the aggravating movement.

For carpal tunnel syndrome, you can purchase a splint that holds your wrist steady while allowing you to keep up with most of your regular tasks. Even if you don't need a splint all day, wearing a splint at night may help hold your wrist in a neutral position that relieves the pressure on your median nerve.

If you have tennis elbow, a special pressure bandage purchased from a medical supply store and worn over your forearm can relieve symptoms.

If symptoms persist despite rest and self-care:

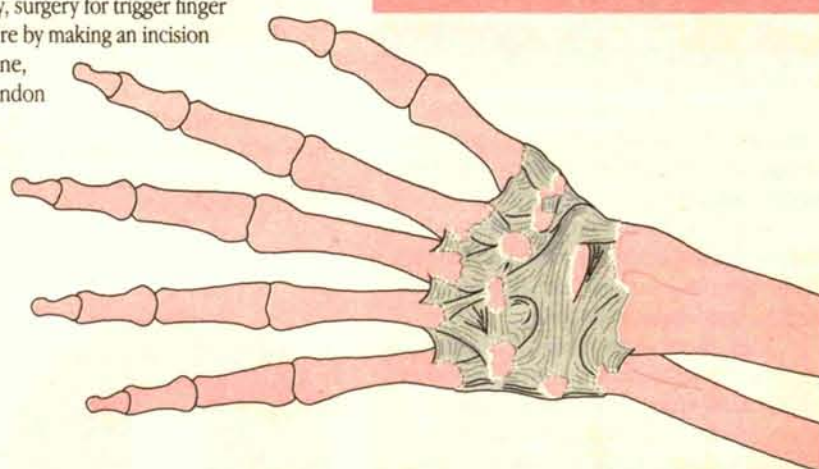
■ **Talk to your doctor** — A prescription analgesic or antidepressant can help manage persistent pain. Your doctor may also want to exclude the possibility of other joint problems such as osteoarthritis.

■ **Take advantage of physical therapy** — Cold and heat applications, ultrasound or electrical stimulation to block nerve pathways can relieve persistent pain and help restore normal muscle function.

A physical therapist can also show you exercises and proper movements that can improve strength and flexibility. Learning simple range-of-motion activities can reduce the likelihood of tendinitis progressing to frozen shoulder.

■ **Consider surgery a last resort** — A corticosteroid injection may relieve severe pain that doesn't respond to traditional treatments. In rare cases when it doesn't, you may need surgery.

Carpal tunnel surgery involves dividing the carpal ligament to relieve pressure on the median nerve. Similarly, surgery for trigger finger relieves pressure by making an incision in the membrane, allowing the tendon to glide freely.



Prevention is a simple formula

The best cure for an overuse strain injury is to avoid initial injury:

■ **Stretch** — Before beginning a repetitive task, stretch the muscles of your shoulders, arms and hands. Slowly bend your wrist back and forth. Or roll your shoulders in small, gentle rotations.

Exercising can also prevent reinjury.

■ **Adapt** — If you're using awkward movements or positions, find new equipment or approaches. For example, buy a table specially designed for comfortable use of your home computer.

■ **Alternate** — Rotate repetitive tasks with other jobs.

■ **Pace** — Take a break at least once an hour.

■ **Stop** — You can avoid many overuse strain injuries by simply stopping at the first sign of pain.

Reprinted from October 1995 Mayo Clinic Health Letter with permission of Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, Rochester, Minn. 55905. For subscription information, call 800-333-9037.

What's bothering you? We would like to know.

Health Harvest is designed to educate Michigan Farm Bureau members about personal well-being, nutrition, physical fitness and improved family wellness and we'd like to hear from you. We constantly look for new health topics to research, questions to be answered by doctors in the "Office Calls" section or new medical procedures to spotlight in "Medical Focus."

We hope you have enjoyed an improved lifestyle from the over 100 articles and self-tests that we've published — from nutritional planning, being "heart smart," exercise tips and easy-

to-read, nourishing "Healthy Bites."

Please take a moment to fill out and send in to us your ideas on what you would like to see in future installments of *Health Harvest*. It can be a health topic, new medical practice, a question to be answered in "Office Calls" or something you've always wanted to find out more about.

Health Harvest Editor
Michigan Farm News
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Managing multiple components: Reduce your somatic cell counts to increase your bottom line

For three months, Michigan's dairy farmers have experienced a larger milk check due to multiple component pricing (MCP). Unfortunately for dairy producers, MCP itself does not add any additional money to the milk marketing system, rather the checks themselves have been increased in size to handle the extra information used in calculating the dairy producer's final milk payment.

There are five major components used in calculating the farm price paid to Michigan's dairy farmers: butterfat, protein, fluid carrier, producer price differential and a somatic cell count (SCC) adjustment.

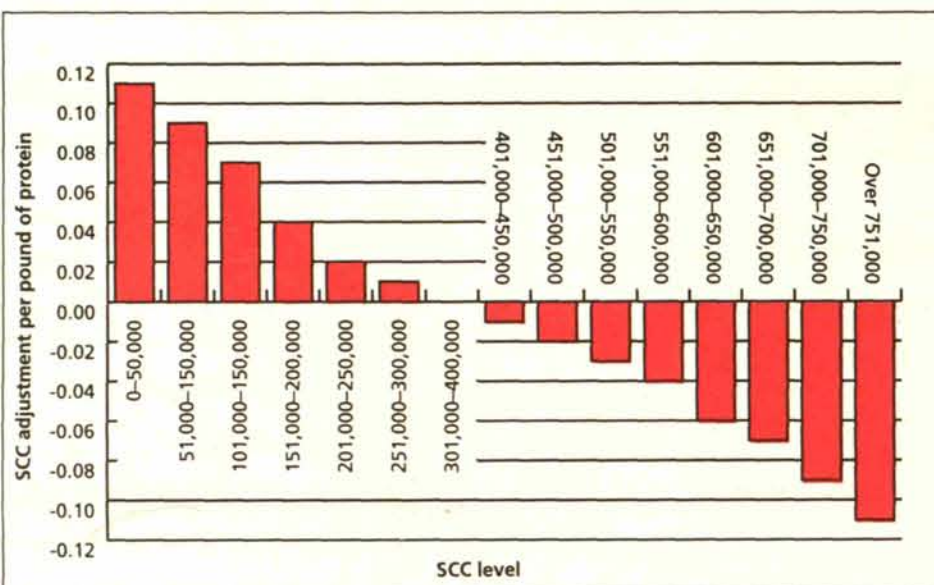
Specifically looking at the single SCC adjustment component, there are many things a dairy farmer can do to reduce their SCC. Many of the suggestions aren't new to Michigan's dairy producers, but for the first time dairy farmers can lose money if their SCC levels aren't held in check, advises MFB's livestock specialist Kevin Kirk. SCC levels above 400,000 reduce the SCC adjustment per pound of protein, he adds.

According to Gary Trimner, Michigan Milk Producer's director of member services/quality control, the reason for the transition to payment on milk quality, specifically the SCC adjustment, is the composition of milk proteins and the effect high SCC or mastitis plays on the protein in milk.

"That's what the whole Multiple Component Pricing is based upon — paying for each part of the milk and how it is used," said Trimner.

Milk naturally separates into caseins (which form cheese-making curds) and whey proteins. Milk with a high somatic cell count has an increase of whey proteins and a decrease of casein, therefore reducing the cheese that can be produced from the higher SCC milk.

Trimner adds that an average SCC is used in calculating the SCC adjuster, based upon five or more tests during the month. The average SCC level is then multiplied by a constant that estimates the change in cheese yield and the current month's Green Bay Cheese Price to give a final adjusted price per pound of protein.



How to reduce your SCC levels

"There are a lot of options for producers (to reduce their SCC levels)," explains MSU Dairy Extension Specialist Roger Mellenberger. "The major ones are what is the cell count of each individual cow in your herd on a monthly basis and what are the organisms that are causing the problem."

"If it's contagious, I have to do something at milking time — segregate cows, teat dip, dry cow treat — anything that's involved with the individual cow and sorting her out so she can't spread it at milking time to somebody else," continues Mellenberger.

"If I have an environmental infection, now I must do something with the housing starting with the dry cow area into the pre-calving and postpartum areas," states Mellenberger. "I'm still doing all the other things, but now I'm focusing in on the cows and heifers in that last month before they calve. Potentially, you have an organism that does not respond to antibiotics and that's why they're living there."

Maintaining a clean and dry bedding area has long been one of the best ways to reduce your levels of somatic cell counts. Regularly changing infla-

tions, keeping milking equipment clean, and pre- and post-dipping are also extremely beneficial.

"If you're going to treat cows," suggests Mellenberger, "my recommendation is very simple: if I put something in the mammary gland, get some individually packaged syringes. If I use a multi-dose bottle to treat a cow, I use disposable needles and I only treat one cow with the same needle."

Mellenberger explains the need to use individual needles simply through how leukosis (a form of leukemia) can be spread with only a small amount

of blood. "If I take the same needle from cow to cow and I get some blood from the first cow that's got leukemia, I take it to the rest."

"So many farmers have a needle stuck in the top of the bottle on the window sill," says Mellenberger. "You've got yeast and fungus that live in dust and all kinds of organisms that can survive under those conditions."

Maintaining a balanced ration

Nutrition can also play a factor in maintaining a healthy cow herd with lower bacteria levels. Maintaining a balanced feed ration keeps an individual cow at her best to defend against harmful organisms.

"If your nutrition gets messed up you get into all the metabolic disorders — milk fever, ketosis, and displaced abomasums," continues Mellenberger. "The rate of clinical mastitis that follows those events is extremely high. When she goes off feed, the organisms are there — it's not that the exposure isn't there, it's can the cow fight them off."

According to the dairy extension specialist, the only thing that specifically has a relationship to reducing infection is adding small amounts of selenium and vitamin E to the dry cow ration, directly impacting the immune system.

"In a nutshell, the basic things needed are cell counts on individual cows on a monthly basis, somatic cell counts by day four on fresh cows and culture information to tell me which organism is causing these problems," states Mellenberger. "Then I can define my management style to fit what the data's telling me."

Farm emergency response placards available

Who do you call?
by Eric Fischer

What do you do in the event of an agricultural pollution emergency such as a chemical spill, a fertilizer spill, fuel spill, or a manure lagoon breach? The answer could be as close as your telephone thanks to the Emergency Response Placard, which resulted from a collaborative effort of the Michigan Farm Bureau, Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA), Michigan State University Extension, and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

The placards, which are printed on weather-resistant durable plastic that can easily be cleaned, are intended to be posted near the telephone in milk parlors, nurseries, or farm shops. Producers can use one of two 24-hour emergency response 800 numbers to the MDA or the DEQ for assistance in an emergency situation.

The guide also contains basic manure management recommendations such as making sure manure handling facilities are designed with the environment in mind, as well as keeping accurate records of manure application dates.

According to Kevin Kirk, Environmental/Commodities Specialist, Michigan Farm Bureau, the placard will help producers contact the proper authorities in a timely manner while also making sure that proper procedure is followed. "Individual producers may not know which agencies to contact for help or know the proper way of notifying the Department of Agriculture or DNR," he said. "Worse yet, an individual producer could be penalized, not because

they didn't want to adhere to the law, they simply didn't know what to do."

Although postage costs make mailing the plastic signs unfeasible, producers can get them at no cost through different organizations such as their county Farm Bureau office, county Extension office, DNR office, and at any major organizational meeting in their area.

Kirk believes the placards will help ease tensions between farmers and their neighbors. "We hope people see this as another example of what agriculture's doing to make the industry aware of what's going on and be conscious of what they're doing out there," he said. "We believe it's a positive step in the right direction."

For more information, call Kirk at 800-292-2680, ext. 2024.

Basic Recommendations for Livestock Manure Management

- Know approximately how much manure will be produced annually.
- Design and operate a manure handling system that minimizes any negative effect on the environment, i.e. prevent manure runoff to surface water, control odors, protect groundwater.
- Control manure runoff from open lots so that it does not leave the facility or farm property.
- Determine the nutrient content of the manure by laboratory analysis.
- Soil test at least every three years for row crops, annually for vegetables and other specialty crops.
- Apply manure at agronomic rates necessary for growing the next crop, according to current soil test recommendations and using manure analysis test results.
- Avoid manure spillage on driveways, roads, etc.
- Keep records of the manure application dates and rates for individual fields.
- Be a good neighbor.
- Follow Right To Farm Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices for Manure Management.

In the event of an agricultural pollution emergency such as a chemical/fertilizer spill, fuel spill, manure lagoon breach, etc., the Michigan Department of Agriculture and/or the Michigan Department of Natural Resources should be contacted at the following 24 hour emergency telephone numbers:

Michigan Department of Agriculture 800-405-0101
Michigan Department of Natural Resources 800-292-4706

If there is not an emergency, but you have questions on the Michigan Right to Farm Act or items concerning a farm operation, please contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Right To Farm Program, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909, 517-373-1087.

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Farm Bureau hosting campaign management workshop



State Rep. Mike Green (R-Mayville) says the workshop provided some helpful tips in his successful bid to be a state representative.

If 1996 is the year you decide to fulfill your political aspirations by running for political office, whether it be township, county, state or national level, make Michigan Farm Bureau's "How to Win an Election" campaign management workshop the first step in getting started. The workshop is scheduled for Feb. 20 and 21 at the MFB Center in Lansing.

The two-day workshop covers a full range of campaign topics, says MFB Public Affairs Director Al Almy, to help first-time candidates make sure they're covering all of the basics. He says the phase-in of term limits will create new opportunities and openings for would-be office holders.

"It's estimated, for example, that term limits will open up 80 new state House seats providing candidates some exciting opportunities," Almy explained. "In past elections, many Farm Bureau members have been candidates for office and have learned that a well-planned and executed campaign is critical. They have also learned that campaigns require a great deal of time and money, meaning that it's not too early to get started."

This is the second such campaign management workshop sponsored by MFB and conducted by American Farm Bureau Political Education Director Brad Eckart. State Rep. Mike Green (R-Mayville) attended the first MFB campaign workshop and says that, despite several years of experience in the political arena as a county commissioner, the workshop provided some helpful tips in his successful bid to be a state representative.

"Even though my background was a county commissioner and I was involved in politics and government, coming here was certainly an eye-opening experience," Green explained. "They tell us that our scope of knowledge has to be an inch thick and a mile long — we have to know a little bit about everything."

Green says the advice he valued the most from the first MFB campaign management workshop was the recommendation to have someone other than yourself manage your campaign. "Although there was a lot of material and topics discussed, that one piece of advice was the one thing that really stood out from that school," Green said.

Campaign management workshop topics for this year's program include:

- Campaign Laws and Reports
- Selecting the Campaign Issues
- Handling the Aggressive Interviewer
- Campaign Budget Preparation
- Raising Campaign Funds
- Campaign Structure
- Role of a Campaign Manager
- Promotion Activities
- Identifying Voters
- Targeting Precincts and Special Interest Groups
- Using Polls
- Election Day Activities

Enrollment will be limited to the first 24 registrants, and Almy encourages the candidates to consider bringing their campaign manager as well. For more registration information, contact Al Almy at (517) 323-6560, prior to the Feb. 5 registration deadline. ■

Price spread summary

Beef

Choice beef retail prices increased slightly more than the farm price from Sept. to Oct. resulting in a one cent increase in the beef farm-to-retail price spread to \$1.51 per retail pound.

Pork

Retail pork prices increased while the farm price decreased from Sept. to Oct. 1995 resulting in an increase in the farm-to-retail spread of nine cents to \$1.30 per retail pound. ■

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Bill Morgan - Sherwood, Michigan

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Isolated cases of TB confirmed in Michigan white-tailed deer

Continued from front page

Tuberculosis-Free Status in cattle since 1979, and we will take the necessary steps to ensure that Michigan agricultural products continue to meet the highest quality standards."

Officials stress that, to maximize safety, if any of the deer's internal organs (e.g., heart, liver, lungs) look abnormal, then the meat should not be eaten. Otherwise, cooking the meat until it is not pink and no red juices flow out should make the meat safe to eat. In fact, this process is recommended for all meat (including beef and poultry) to make it safe from other bacteria, as well.

Cooperative efforts will continue between DNR, MDA, MDPH, USDA and MSU, including collecting samples of deer to be taken in 1996 throughout the state, but concentrating in Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency and Oscoda counties. State officials will meet with club managers and members to educate them about tuberculosis. Clubs will also be strongly discouraged from maintaining artificially high deer concentrations.

What is tuberculosis?

Tuberculosis is an infection with any of the following Mycobacteria: Mycobacterium bovis, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, Mycobacterium africanum or Mycobacterium microti. M. bovis (a type commonly found in cattle in the early part of this century) and M. tuberculosis (a type most associated with humans) are the most important in the United States. Though it is very rare, pets can be-

come infected with TB. You should call your local veterinarian, or the Michigan Department of Agriculture, (517) 373-1077, if you believe you have reason to worry about your animals' health.

What are the signs and symptoms of tuberculosis?

The signs of disease depend on what part of the body is most affected; usually this is the lungs. There may be coughing and difficulty breathing. Overall, infected animals will lose weight and appear to be in poor condition in later stages of the disease. Early in the disease, the animal may look normal.

How is the disease spread?

Tuberculosis is primarily spread through the air. When an infected animal is in close contact with other animals, contamination from coughing and sneezing can spread the disease. Repeated or prolonged exposure is often a factor.

Why is tuberculosis prevalent at this location?

Artificial concentrations of deer in the impacted area, due to winter-long supplemental feeding was very likely a major factor in TB infection. We know that the disease is most likely to spread in situations where animals are overcrowded.

Could a hunter who shot and gutted a deer in northeast Michigan contract TB?

It is very unlikely that a person field-dressing a deer infected with TB would become infected. Prevention is always the best policy. To minimize risk, wear heavy rubber gloves while gutting deer.

Should a hunter see something unusual while field-dressing a deer, they should stop field-dressing and contact the DNR.

It is possible to transmit tuberculosis from animals to people, and from people to animals. This is extremely rare, and there are no records of a person ever catching TB from a deer in Michigan.

Is deer meat safe to eat?

Cooking the meat until it is not pink and no red juices flow out should make the meat safe to eat. In fact, this process is recommended for all meat (including beef and poultry) to make it safe from other bacteria, as well. To maximize safety, if any of the deer's internal organs (e.g., heart, liver, lungs) look abnormal, then the meat should not be eaten.

Are any tests being conducted to determine if anyone has contracted TB from infected deer?

The Michigan Department of Public Health is coordinating with the local health department to test persons who were exposed to the diseased deer through field-dressing or processing the carcasses.

Can I be tested to determine if I have caught TB?

You can receive a TB skin test at your local health department or a private physician's office. A positive skin test means that you have TB infection, but it does not mean that the infection came from exposure to diseased deer.

The small percentage of adults, about 5 percent in the United States, who are infected with TB

received that infection from other people. A positive skin test indicates only that the micro-organism is present and the body has developed an immune response. It is important to note that the risk of developing TB disease from an infection is small.

The lifetime risk of developing disease for people who are infected and who have a healthy immune system is about 10 percent. People who have been exposed to other people or animals with suspected or confirmed TB should be tested.

If I shoot a deer and field-dress it, what should I be looking for in a TB-infected animal?

Small tan or yellow lumps may be present lining the chest wall and in the lung tissue. The lungs will have these nodules throughout the tissue. If you see lesions like these, contact the DNR so that the head of the deer can be examined.

Will screening for TB in deer take place next year?

Yes. There will be a statewide surveillance program and a more concentrated effort in the four-county area of Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency and Oscoda.

What is going to be done to stop the possible spread of TB to other deer?

Decreasing transmission of TB from deer to deer is essential, and can be accomplished by decreasing the density of deer and eliminating supplemental feeding in the 8 mile by 12 mile area where TB was found. A combination of a volunteer elimination of winter-long feeding and an increase in deer harvest will decrease deer-to-deer contacts, and lessen the possibility of transmission.

What will be done to determine if livestock have been infected?

As a follow-up to the infected wild white-tailed deer found in northeast lower Michigan, the Department of Agriculture tested livestock in the local vicinity. No infected animals were found. Within the next few weeks, MDA will be starting another testing program. Livestock within a 5-mile radius of each infected deer found this year will be tested.

I own cattle in northeastern lower Michigan. What will happen to them?

Domestic livestock within 5 miles of where a deer has been found to test positive for TB will be TB-tested by USDA or MDA. This will primarily affect cattle herds and captive deer/elk herds.

Animal owners should utilize management practices that promote good general health of their animals. Animals that are well-fed with nutritious food, appropriately vaccinated against other diseases, and maintained in clean, uncrowded conditions, will be healthier and better able to resist infection from diseases in general.

What does it mean that Michigan is a USDA accredited tuberculosis-free state for cattle?

It means that, through an active surveillance program, which includes extensive multi-year testing and removal of infected cattle, Michigan is officially recognized as being free of tuberculosis in cattle. Michigan attained this status in 1979.

Will the current situation affect the exportation of cattle or deer from Michigan?

At this time, the exportation of livestock is not affected, as long as the state maintains its active surveillance program, and its status as tuberculosis-free.

Timber rustling becoming expensive problem

The days of widespread cattle rustling in Texas are gone, but a new, expensive type of rustling — timber theft — has come to the forefront. The problem is so widespread in the south and southwestern part of the country, that some estimates show annual losses of \$75 million to raw timber theft.

In the south, where about 58 percent of all timber produced each year in the U.S. now comes from, the problem is rampant. The offending loggers often trespass or ignore neighboring property lines to cut down trees because the price of logs has nearly doubled over the last two years and the number of absentee landowners also has increased.

Although stealing trees is a crime, some say the road to justice is often rough. Unlike cattle, trees are not readily identified and catching a tree rustler, who often performs his work late at night, can be tough.

"If you have good documentation of what happened it's not hard, but a lot of times people just go in the dead of night and cut down timber without a trace," said Assistant District Attorney Art Bauereiss.



ONCE AGAIN, THE CREAM RISES TO THE TOP.

DK471

• Marvin Dane - Albion, MI (Jackson County)
Planted: Harvested: 10/11/95

Brand-Hybrid	#2 Yield	Harvest Moisture	\$ Return Per Acre*
DEKALB--DK471	140.9	17.2%	\$389.73
DEKALB--DK493	140.8	17.8%	\$387.76
Pioneer--3723	138.4	18.1%	\$380.32
Pioneer--3733	125.5	18.9%	\$342.87

DK493

• Sheridan Farms - Fairgrove, MI (Tuscola County)
Planted: Harvested: 10/10/95

Brand-Hybrid	#2 Yield	Harvest Moisture	\$ Return Per Acre*
DEKALB--DK493	168.8	24.2%	\$443.27
Great Lakes--GL471	150.7	24.2%	\$395.74
Pioneer--3769	143.9	25.2%	\$375.00

DK 527

• Vern Nauta - Ada, MI (Kent County)
Planted: 05/03/95 Harvested: 10/06/95

Brand-Hybrid	#2 Yield	Harvest Moisture	\$ Return Per Acre*
DEKALB--DK527	130.4	22.2%	\$347.65
DEKALB--DK442	123.5	21.3%	\$331.47
DEKALB--DK493	115.2	20.7%	\$310.58
DEKALB--DK471	108.1	21.4%	\$289.92
DEKALB--DK512	109.1	23.9%	\$287.15
Pioneer--3573	112.6	25.5%	\$292.76
Pioneer--3751	100.2	22.8%	\$265.93



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*Return Per Acre Calculated @ \$2.80 per Bushel and \$.02 Drying Cost per Point of Moisture above 15.5%.

Comparisons with New Zealand dairy production

Continued from page 7

Economics of Production		
US\$/100 lb. milk	N.Z.	U.S.
Income		
Milk	8.42	13.23
Other	1.29	1.97
Total	9.71	15.20
Expenses		
Feed	0.80	3.86
Fertilizer	1.04	0.44
Other	1.84	6.55
Direct	3.68	10.85
Overheads	1.69	2.70
Total	5.37	13.55
Net Surplus	4.34	1.65

Despite the 50 percent decrease in income earned by N.Z. dairy farmers through their almost total reliance on world market prices, their expenses are substantially lower, largely because of the much lower requirements for purchased feed. This results in a net surplus 2.5 times greater than that of their US counterparts. Given that the average herd produces a similar amount of milk in each country, the N.Z. farmer received the equivalent of US\$58,000 to pay interest, managerial rewards and living expenses, compared with US\$22,000 in the U.S.

Likely Future Developments

For the US dairy farmer, given the continuing move to deregulate the industry, it is highly unlikely that milk prices will remain at the present level, let alone rise. The alternatives therefore are to try to increase production per herd without increasing costs, or to reduce costs without a marked decrease in production. Both these approaches are being adopted and hence the debate regarding the use of new technologies to improve production (e.g. BST) versus low input systems such as intensive grazing.

In New Zealand, the competitive advantage for the dairy farmer will continue to be based on making the maximum use of grazed pasture. The emphasis is on production per acre rather than per cow, as land is the most limiting and expensive resource. In the past, this has meant increasing

stocking rates to ensure pasture does not go to waste. In turn, this has resulted in cows rarely being fed to achieve maximum intakes — a situation described by some observers as "controlled starvation." Consequently, lactation lengths have been decreasing — the 1993/94 average for herd tested cows was 221 days in milk — and cows are not given the opportunity to reach their genetic potential for milk production.

Much attention is therefore being focused on providing supplementary feed for grazing cows. Pasture by itself does not provide an ideal balance of nutrients for the high yielding cow. Use of appropriately formulated supplements may increase both feed intake and nutrient utilization. Where this can be shown in practice to provide an economic return, then farmers may be prepared to adapt their management systems to accommodate regular feeding of supplements. However, the reliance on world milk prices will preclude systems which involve high levels of capital investment and costly rations such as cereal grains. High quality forages such as corn and grass silages, green-feed crops and industrial by-products are more likely to be used as an adjunct to the basal diet of grazed pasture.

Should you vigor test your seed?

Extreme weather conditions this past growing season could impact the vigor of seed lots from across the state, according to the Michigan Crop Improvement Association (MCIA). A hot and dry growing season, combined with later heavy rains and an early frost, contribute to lost quality due to mechanical damage, temperature and moisture stress.

MCIA is advising producers to test the vigor of seed as an inexpensive, rapid way to estimate actual field performance. MCIA conducts three vigor tests in addition to standard germination tests.

TZ Test

The Tetrazolium Chloride staining test, or TZ test, is valuable in determining seed viability and quality in a 24-hour period. Based on the staining patterns, soybeans or dry beans are classified into four categories, high vigor, medium vigor, low vigor and dead seed. MCIA recommends that seed lots have at least an 80 percent combined high and medium vigor to be considered as high quality.

Cold Vigor Test

The cold vigor test is another valuable tool in helping to decide the quality or vigor of a seed lot. This test subjects seed to a cool temperature of 50°F soil conditions to see how well the seed performs in adverse conditions. After appropriate time, exposure in the cold, and then in optimum condi-

tions, the seedlings are evaluated to determine if they are normal or abnormal. Results are reported as a cold germination percentage.

Accelerated Aging Tests

Accelerated Aging (AA) is another test to be used as a management tool in determining seed performance and storability. In this test, the seeds are stressed, prior to germination, with high temperatures and high relative humidity, and then germination percentage checked.

MCIA recommends that AA germination levels of 80 percent or better be considered as high vigor seed. According to MCIA, research shows that AA testing can help predict the storability of seed, which can be critical in cases where seeds will be carried over from one year to the next. AA is available for small grains, soybeans, corn and drybeans.

The results of these tests can help in selecting seed lots based on quality of seed. Vigor testing is also important for carryover seed as well as new crop seed.

For more information on seed vigor testing, contact MCIA's Seed Laboratory at (517) 355-7555. If you're interested in submitting samples to MCIA for testing, you can send them through the mail to: P.O. Box, 21008, Lansing, MI 48909 or by UPS to 2901 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, MI 48864.

Michigan Farm Bureau farm employee safety meetings set

Dates and locations have been set for a series of 12 MFB safety seminars that have been developed under a safety education grant from the Safety Education and Training Division of the Michigan Department of Labor.

Participants in these seminars will learn how to reduce the time and cost of employee and family protection, and will better understand the numerous and sometimes duplicative provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency's Worker Protection Standard, the Michigan Occupational Health and Safety Act and Workers' Compensation Insurance. An added benefit of the seminars for Certified Applicators will be the availability of recertification credits for participation in the program.

Here are the dates and locations of the seminars:

- Jan. 26, 2-5 p.m., Kalamazoo Valley College. Contact Lyndon Kelly, 616-467-5511.
- Jan. 30, 6-9 p.m., Mt. Clemens Extension office. Contact Hannah Stevens, 810-469-6440.
- Feb. 1, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Ithaca Community Center. Contact Dan Rossman, 517-875-5233.
- Feb. 14, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor. Contact Mark Longstroth, 616-657-7745.
- Feb. 20, 1-4 p.m., Shelby United Methodist Church. Contact Norm Meyers, 616-873-2129.
- Feb. 22, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Alpena Community College. Contact Paul Wegmeyer, 517-354-3636.

- Feb. 28, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Summerset Township Hall (Hillsdale/Jackson). Contact Dave Pratt, 517-788-4292.
- March 6, 1-4 p.m., Detroit Edison Service Center, Cass City. Contact Jim LeCureux, 517-269-6099.
- March 12, 1-4 p.m., Monroe County Extension Office. Contact Paul Marks, 313-243-7113.
- March 14, 1-4 p.m., Allegan County ISD office, Allegan. Contact Paul Wylie, 616-673-0370.
- March 19, 1-4 p.m., Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville. Contact Andy Norman, 616-882-0025.
- April 3, 12:30-4:30 p.m., Delta County Service Center, Escanaba. Contact Warren Schauer, 906-786-3032.

Michigan Farm News Classified

01 Farm Machinery

1440 IH COMBINE, \$3800. 15' grain head, 843 corn head. Completely reconditioned, maintenance records, extra rotor Baxter. One owner, always housed. St. Louis, Michigan. Call 1-517-681-4251.

1938 ALLIS CHALMERS Model-60 combine. 5' cut, original paint, owners manual. \$1000 or best offer. Call 517-726-1322 or 517-676-5827.

1978 MF 1085D, CAH, multi-power, power adjust rear wheels, 75% rubber, 3-point, 2 remotes, housed. Excellent condition! 3200 hours, \$8000. Deerfield, 1-517-447-3361.

6000 JD HIGH CYCLE sprayer with cab for sale. Air and 60' hydraulic boom. Brand new! \$39,900. High bin loader for 1640, 1660, 1666 or 1680, \$275. 8 row IH 20" bean planter with plates, cylinders and hoses, 28" rows where the tractor runs, \$200. 1-616-756-9368.

ATTENTION FARMERS! Custom built free stalls. Example: New York style 72" stall, \$32 complete. Also, custom built farm gates. Call Schneider Fabrication 1-517-593-2684

FORD, NEW HOLLAND tractors and equipment from Symon's in Gaines. For 43 years, your best deal for the long run!

Symon's Tractor Gaines, 1-517-271-8445

GRAIN SEED BINS: All sizes, \$100, up. Brower mixer, \$800. Elevator legs, \$400, up. Other seed processing equipment. Stanton, 517-831-8317, 517-831-5589.

01 Farm Machinery

HESSTON TUB GRINDER for sale. Like new! \$5,200. Gehl flail chopper, 6' cut. Good condition! \$750. Call 1-810-657-9087.

INTERNATIONAL corn planter. John Deere offset disk, 12'. Van Dale gutter cleaner, 22' chain. Patz gutter cleaner, 270' chain. Call 616-734-2532.

JOHN DEERE 7200, 4-row no-till corn planter, plateless, finger pickup, monitor, less than 2,000 acres. Excellent condition! Lilliston 13 hole no-till drill, 2,000 acres. Excellent condition! Call 1-517-734-4000 for information.

KINZE FOUR ROW, double frame, three Coulter Rawson (new coulters), dry fertilizer, plastic cross auger, monitor, planter mounted liquid 28 tank, John Blue pump, trash wheels, planted 1300 acres. Excellent condition. \$8500. 1-517-654-2531 1-517-654-2425.

NEW HOLLAND 270 hay baler with thrower. Field ready! \$1800 or best offer. Also 1st cutting hay. Call 1-616-754-6969.

PLATFORM SCALES: 7'x10', 40,000 pounds, digital read out and hand held remote. Also can be hooked to a printer. Excellent condition! 1952 John Deere combine. Heath bean puller, 6-row. 517-693-6695.

RETIRING FROM FARM: Tools, 8 tractors, 90hp or less, tillage, harvesting, planting. Heavy duty steam cleaner, 2 water pressure cleaners and many 3-point tools. Call between 6pm-8pm, 1-517-279-1762.

01 Farm Machinery

TRACTOR CHAINS: Large selection! Baled wheat straw. Several spreaders and grinder mixers. Stored inside! Call 1-517-773-5374 after 1pm. Dan Reid.

02 Livestock Equipment

BUZZ SAW: 3-point. Several stock trailers. 20' flat goose neck. 16' bumper car hauler. Two horse trailer, dressing. Call 1-313-461-1414.

CONVEYER for sale. Single chain, 50'. New motor! Starline shuttle feeder, #85. Starline 20' silo unloader for parts. Two self-unloading forage wagons. 1-517-642-8414.

FOR SALE: Semen tank; 75 straws Melwood, Kemper, Rex, Secret; DeLaval milker with electronic pulsators, glass line, large claws, Surge cube cooler, 500 gallon Craft bulk tank; Cablevey for double four parlor. 1-517-639-4739. Leave message.

MANURE SPREADERS: New and used, Balzer, Better-Bilt parts. UPS daily. Also grain dryers and handling equipment. Hamilton Distributing Co. 1-800-248-8070

OSWALT 230 MIXER w/scale, \$5000. Jamesway 120 belt cable feeder, \$1500. Vandale 20' conveyor, \$400. Vandale 20' silo unloader with motor, \$1000. 1-616-642-9835, 1-616-642-6328.

03 Farm Commodities

ALFALFA HAY, all cuttings, square bales, no rain, large quantities at discount. Straw, wheat, clean square bales. Call evenings or leave message. 1-517-496-3527, 1-517-496-3536.

BAYSIDE SEED CORN: Topped MSU County Extension Plot in Isabella and others, for about \$50 per bag. Check your local trials or call, B&M SEED 1-517-463-2846

EXCELLENT QUALITY dairy hay for sale. Delivery available. Call 1-517-864-3180.

FIRST CUTTING and second cutting hay, square bales. Shelled corn and 570 New Holland square baler. Brand new, \$10,500. Call 1-517-766-2446.

FIRST, SECOND and third cutting alfalfa hay for sale. Delivery available! Call 1-517-864-3402.

GIANT SQUARE BALES of hay and straw and small square straw bales. Delivery available! Edward Kalis Winn, 1-517-866-2540

MICHIGAN CERTIFIED SEED: Newdak, Porter, Prairie oats. Bowers barley. Felix, Conrad, Century 854, Vinton 81 soy beans. Chinook light reds. Also Dairy Brand and Crystal alfalfa. B&M SEED 1-517-463-2846

QUALITY ALFALFA and mixed hay. Almont Michigan. Ferguson Farms 1-810-395-7512

STRAW FOR SALE: 2000 bales of clean wheat straw. Call 1-517-684-3575. Evenings best time.

05 Livestock

ANGUS BEEF: Bulls, heifers and cows with calves. Performance tested, semen tested. Free Delivery! Call anytime, SHAGBARK FARMS Alto, Michigan 1-616-868-6040

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05 Livestock

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FOR CURRENT LIST of available Angus Cattle, write: Secretary, West Michigan Angus Breeders, 585 36th Street SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49509.

REGISTERED POLLED hereford breeding age bulls, heifers. Also Al bred heifers and cows. Rocky Banner bloodlines. MSU performance tested. Call Rye Hereford Farm, 1-517-734-3005

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Michigan Farm News Classified

05

Livestock

LLAMAS ARE GREAT, and now they're affordable! These docile, intelligent animals make wonderful pets for hiking, packing, picnicking, pulling carts, or to just plain enjoy. Their wool is valuable and they also make outstanding guard animals. Call for a visit today! 1-616-677-3309. Ron and Nancy Laferriere.

Laferriere Llamas
Marne, Michigan
(Just northwest of Grand Rapids).

LLAMAS: North American Sittling Bull and Essex bloodlines. Pet males and weanling females. Reasonable prices! Call for more information and visit, 1-517-645-2719.

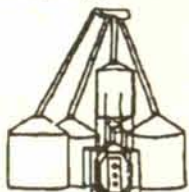
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Sturgis, MI 616-651-8353.

REGISTERED TEXAS Longhorn bulls. Available at weaning. Diamond 6 Ranch, Saranac, Michigan. Call 1-616-642-9042.

REGISTERED Scottish Highland cattle, breeding stock and semen for sale. Visitors welcome! Call 1-517-543-7979 evenings or weekends. Charlotte, Michigan.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK: "Livestock of the Future". TB accredited herd. Animals of all ages! Traverse City, Michigan.

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TWO HOLSTEIN BULLS for sale. Service age. & Call 1-517-637-4271

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Dogs and Puppies

BORDER COLLIE PUPPIES for sale. Traditional and tri-colored, ABCA registered. Both parents on site. Bred for work or trail. Excellent eye! Call 1-517-379-3918, Lachine.

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ENGLISH SHEPHERD Sable colored puppies. Born August 25, 1995. Some with tails bobbed. Call 1-517-522-8501.

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NATIONWIDE

09

Help Wanted

OPPORTUNITY

Position open for a hands-on working farmer (preferably with family) to manage and farm 691 acres of Productive, quality farmland and forest in Redmond Township, Good Hart, Michigan. Approximately 400 farmland acres owned and leased, 200 acres under irrigation. New farm machinery and equipment, plus new 43,000 square-foot hay storage barn, handling facilities, equipment storage barns and repair shop.

Must be experienced and knowledgeable in running a fine horse hay (alfalfa-brome) farm. Someone who knows the earth, preparation, fertilization, seed, growing, cutting, baling, storing and marketing of fine horse hay for discriminating buyers.

Must be willing and capable of providing:

Daily management of general business activities including contract and hourly employees and services.

Clear, accurate recordkeeping and accountability.

Daily accounting - payables/receivables - cash flow records - material receiving and shipping records, general purchases.

Provide monthly statement of above to management (General Manager), general bookkeeping offsite.

Work from mutually-agreed budget.

Advise and counsel management in the best interests and welfare of the operation, including capital equipment, buildings, maintenance, operations, crops, and land development and improvement.

Coordination of crop marketing, with knowledgeable hay brokers, or direct.

Take orders-follow orders-give orders.

Leadership.

Interface and communicate at all times with everyone involved inside/outside the operation.

Good character - honest, trustworthy, loyal, with integrity, ethics and compassion.

Caring for people, equipment, land and nature.

Must recognize and accept responsibility to provide and maintain a proficient level of current and advancing technology pertaining to farm and its requirements.

Owner provides:

Health benefits - major medical.

Workman's compensation, liability and life insurance (to

09

Help Wanted

be discussed).

Bonus plan based on performance, profit and contribution.

Annual compensation contract paid monthly, long-term employment desirable, based upon successful performance.

Housing on farm negotiable in the compensation package.

All necessary equipment to run and maintain the operation added as recommended and mutually agreed upon by farm manager and management.

Would consider contracting any services in the farm's best interests.

Should you be selected for consideration, an interview with you and later your family and a visit to the farm would be arranged.

All responses will be acknowledged.

Owner's achievement goal:

An excellent profitable farm operation.

A happy place to live, work, and raise a family.

Send personal resume and references including your thoughts and suggestions if the opportunity were yours to:

Marlene Savine, 100 West Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48304.

INDIVIDUALS for custom harvesting operation. Texas through Montana, 1996 season. Must be clean, honest, hard working, with farm background. Full time work possible.

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10

Work Wanted

POSITION WANTED Experienced farm manager looking for a position in management or a related position. Experienced in sales, in growing all types of vegetables.

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11

Agricultural Services

EXPERIENCED Michigan agribusiness attorneys with farm backgrounds. Knowledge and experience in all farm areas; restructure, stray voltage, bankruptcy, estate planning.

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Business Opportunities

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Circulation over 46,000 in State of Michigan.

Revision of the Subdivision Control Act

People involved in agriculture have little objection to economic growth. Farmers, by and large, believe that economic expansion is in fact a crucial part of maintaining a positive, family and business-friendly environment in the state. However, it is important that farmers and non-farmers work together to ensure that economic growth, and residential sprawl in particular, can be managed so it has the minimum amount of negative impact on agriculture as possible.

Rural residential sprawl may seem to cause little damage in the beginning because it initially requires few public services. But once public service needs for roads, police, fire, schools and emergency services increase beyond a low rural level, sprawl becomes very expensive. If unplanned or poorly planned development continues, it can be costly to taxpayers and severely damage the value of farms and forests.

A related development problem is land division. In the form of unplatted lot splits, it continues to fragment Michigan land that can and has supported farming and forestry. The current Subdivision Control Act encourages this trend by permitting the creation of an unlimited number of parcels over 10 acres without formal review and approval by a governmental body. As a consequence, rural unplatted subdivisions are created without any public review. Over a 20- to 40-year period...almost without public notice...large areas of farmland,

forest and open space are lost. Once these parcels are used for housing, they can never again be used for viable, commercial agricultural production.

Furthermore, the residents who move out to these "country estates" find to their dismay that farm operations often involve the use of large and noisy equipment, sometimes operating at all hours of the day and night. Farms generate dust and odors and animal manure. Despite the best efforts of farmers to be "good neighbors," new residents find that farm activities conflict with their image of the quiet countryside. Farmers then find themselves subject to harassment or even lawsuits.

In an effort to find solutions to these problems, a work group of legislators, Realtors, surveyors, developers and builders met during most of 1995 to discuss proposed changes in the Subdivision Control Act and develop language for a draft reform bill. Farm Bureau was involved in the meetings.

Then there were also three legislative field hearings held around state in 1995 to give the public an opportunity to comment on Subdivision Control Act reform. At least two reform bills — one in House and one in the Senate — are being considered to amend the Act.

Where will the legislation go from here? "The Committee chair will make that decision, but the real question you have to ask is what kind of debate will go on during an election year," said MFB Legislative Counsel Ron Nelson. "It's a very complex issue that

involves substantial economic activity all across the state. Beyond that, reform of the Subdivision Control Act is controversial because it involved natural conflicts between different units of government, and between developers and lenders. This makes arriving at a consensus more tenuous," Nelson said.

To the extent that lenders want to lend, builders want to build and governmental planners want to plan, they all want Subdivision Control Act revisions that are positive toward their interests, according to Nelson. "It's important for these people to understand that farmland preservation is not compatible with aggressive development," he said. "In some areas, all parties are interested in the same parcel."

"Farm Bureau is sympathetic to arguments that the process of platting a subdivision is very costly and cumbersome," Nelson continued. "Part of the reform being considered would speed up the platting process. But how would that affect agriculture's interest in effective and thoughtful land use planning? These are the kinds of trade-offs that complicate the Subdivision Control Act reform effort."

This is an issue that will be at the forefront of Farm Bureau's farmland preservation efforts during 1996. Members of your group have probably been involved in Subdivision Control Act reform through the policy development process. As legislation begins to move in Lansing, you may be asked to carry out your organization's policy by making legislative contacts in support of effective and sustainable reform.



Discussion Questions for February 1996

- 1) Should the "over 10 acres" parcel requirement be adjusted up or down to avoid land fragmentations? If so, which way and how much?
- 2) When new housing is proposed for an area, what should be done to protect current agricultural practices?
- 3) Should platting be required for all new development? Why or why not?
- 4) Has the current Subdivision Control Act created any problems in your area?
- 5) Is there a better alternative to the Subdivision Control Act that would allow agriculture and rural residents to both be happy and prosper in the same rural area?

Environmentalism — New opportunities for agriculture?

Although the radical environmental agendas of the late '80s may be a thing of the past, agriculture still has tremendous challenges and opportunities to work with the mainstream environmental groups to put measures in place that provide both an economic and environmental return for agriculture, according to Dr. Sandra Batie, chair of the Elton R. Smith Endowed Chair for ag policy in the MSU Agricultural Economics Department.

Batie says that the critical attitude of government and the resulting deregulatory efforts of the current Congress, has left many of the environmental groups "in shock, and willing to come to the table to talk about compromises and solutions."

"What agriculture has to do is find solutions that benefit us all," Batie suggested. "The opportunities for agriculture to be involved have never been better for creating a win-win solution on environmental issues."

Batie believes the trend toward less mandates and the adaptation of more performance-based standards will promote ingenuity and unique partnerships between industry and government agencies. "Agencies such as the EPA are saying, 'you know your business — we want this outcome — it's up to you to figure out how you're going to do it,'" Batie explained. "The diversity of agriculture doesn't lend itself well to standards designed and mandated by regulatory agencies."

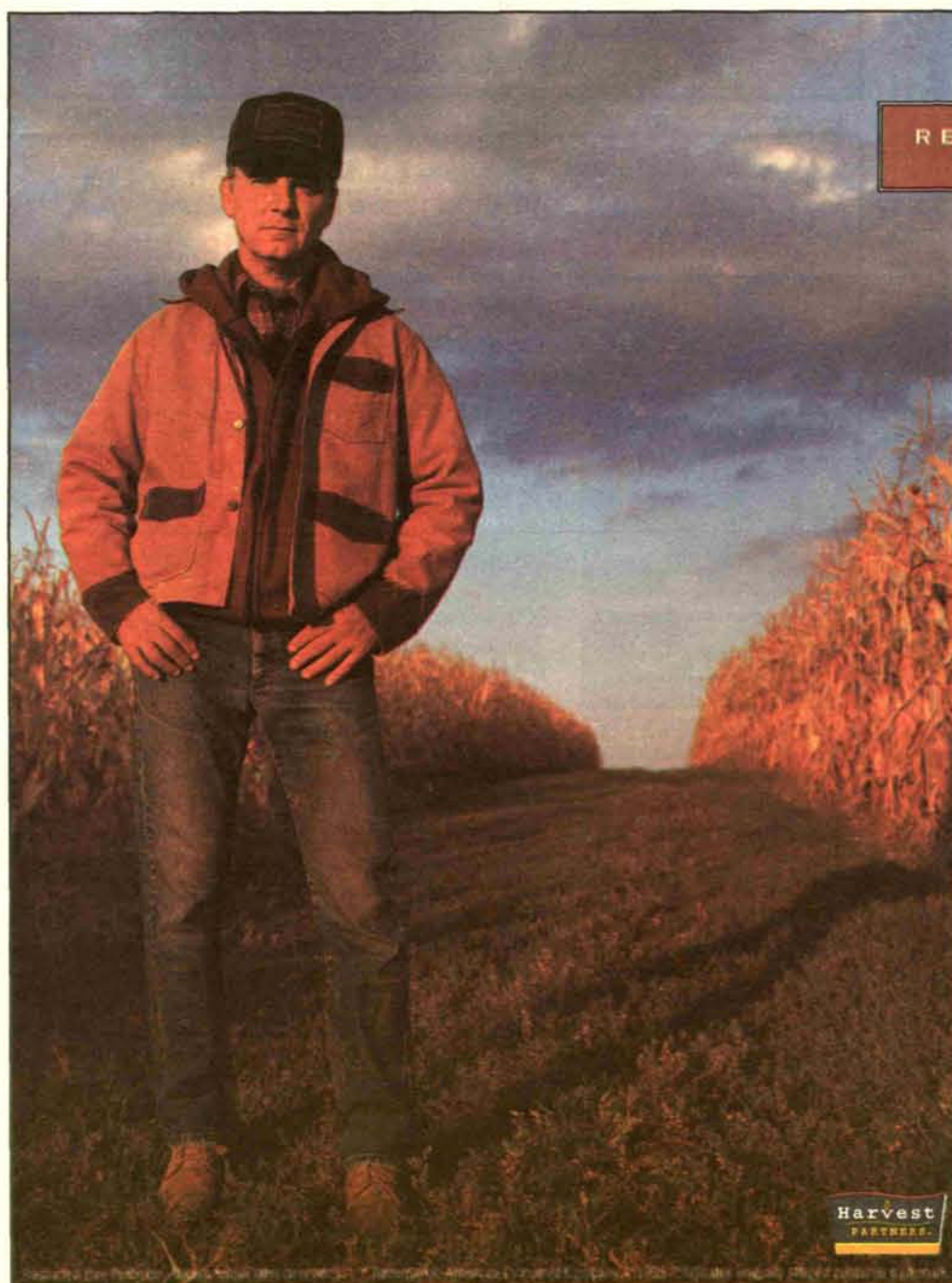
Site specific agriculture, says Batie, is a classic example of how agricultural productivity and profitability can potentially be improved while also providing excellent environmental benefits. "We've got a tremendous opportunity staring us in the face, where we can decrease inputs and still maintain productivity and profits," she said.

Large operations will also likely be treated differently than smaller operations, Batie predicts, adding that flexibility will be the key to getting each operation in compliance with future regulations. "Specific problems will be targeted and dealt with on a case-by-case basis to reach a desired outcome," Batie said, meaning that targeted projects such as individual watershed programs, will continue to grow in popularity.

All of these factors, combined with a "less government is better mentality," will likely mean less federal government regulatory action, but more activity at state, county and township levels, meaning that farmers need to stay alert and be involved, advises Batie. "It would be a crime if agriculture were not at the table during these discussions," she concluded. ■

Fact of the Day!

US. corn exports as of mid-October reached a whopping 922 million bushels; last year at that time, exports only had reached 465 million bushels. ■



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